

DISCOURSES

by

Meher Baba

Vol. I





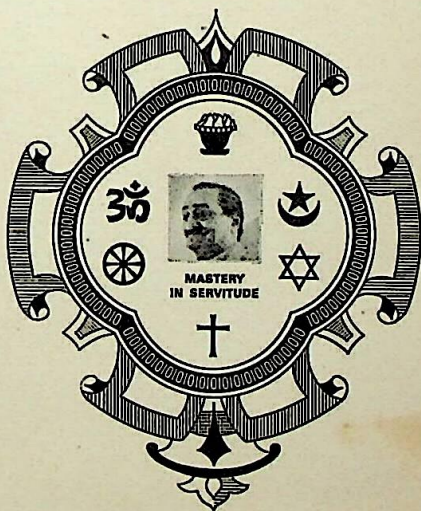
"I have come not to teach but to awaken."

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1967

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6th Edition

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The Editors

Introduction

Merwan Sheriar Irani was born in Poona, India, on February 25, 1894. His parents were of Persian extraction. His father, Sheriar Irani, was a persistent seeker of God.

Merwan was a lively and happy boy who excelled in both studies and sports. In 1913 while in his first year at Poona's Deccan College he met the aged Muslim saint Hazrat Babajan, one of the five Perfect Masters of the time. Being attracted to her, he visited her from time to time and one day she kissed him on the forehead, revealing to him his state of God-realization.

At first Merwan was dazed but gradually the focus of his consciousness returned sufficiently to his surroundings to lead him to the *Qutub-i-Irshad*, Sai Baba, who in turn sent him to another Perfect Master, the Hindu, Upasni Maharaj of Sakori. For seven years Upasni Maharaj integrated Merwan's God-consciousness with consciousness of the mundane world, preparing him for his role as the Avatar of the Age. This avataric mission started in 1921 with the gathering together of his first disciples, who gave him the name "Meher Baba" or "Compassionate Father."

After years of intensive work with these disciples, and travel in India and Persia (Iran), Meher Baba established quarters at an old military camp near

Ahmednagar. This became known as Meherabad. Here he instituted a number of pilot plant projects such as a free hospital and dispensary, shelters for the poor and a free school where spiritual training was stressed. In the school no caste lines were observed, as the high and the low mingled in common fellowship forged by love of the Master. To all Baba offered regular instruction in moral discipline, love for God, spiritual understanding and selfless service.

All these activities moved at high speed despite Baba's silence, which he announced with little advance warning and commenced on July 10, 1925. At first he communicated by pointing to letters on an alphabet board, but in 1954 he gave up even this device. He now converses through his own unique shorthand system of representative gestures. Both *Discourses* and *God Speaks*, however, were dictated on the alphabet board.

During the early 1930's Baba's travels began to reach into Europe and then on to America. Contacting literally thousands on both continents, his name rapidly became known to those deeply and sincerely interested in the spiritual disciplines. Some of these he selected into small groups, arranging for them to come later to India. Their visits ranged generally from weeks to years, but before and during World War II all but a small handful were sent back to their homes.

After the war his own travels resumed, but visits of Westerners to India were now normally individual and brief. An exception was the great East-West gathering of November 1962. Thousands of his devotees from all over the world converged on Poona by ship, plane and special trains. For almost a week Baba gave unstintingly of himself in mass darshans, group meetings and personal interviews. The fare was as varied as the assemblage: brief discourses, give and take with old

friends, song in praise of God, prayers, embracing the close ones, a day of mass darshan and crowds storming the gates at sunset. The world's literature contains many references to the need for transfusion between East and West. Here was a rich human stew of contrasting elements in which mutual respect, affection and unity in praise of the Loved One bridged vast differences in tradition.

A persistent theme throughout the five decades of Meher Baba's ministration has been his seeking out of the God-intoxicated and his homage to those lamed by disease and want. He has described most clearly through Dr. William Donkin in *The Wayfarers* the difference between those who have lost touch with creation through insanity and those who have merely turned the focus of their hearts to their vision of God. These latter he terms *masts*. Especially in the 1940's, Meher Baba contacted hundreds of these God-intoxicated souls throughout India, often tending personally to their most intimate needs, giving each what only he might know to be required, and returning them finally to their natural surroundings.

Those stricken by leprosy have been a constant concern of Baba. With infinite care and love he washes their feet, bows his forehead to the often twisted stumps on which they hobble, and sends them on their way with renewed hope and peace. "They are like beautiful birds caught in an ugly cage," he once said on such an occasion. "Of all the tasks I have to perform, this touches me most deeply."

While Baba has travelled widely and contacted millions of people, he emphasizes that he has come not to teach, but to awaken. He states that Truth has been given by the great Messengers of the past, and that the present task of humanity is to *realize* the teaching em-

bodied in each of the great Ways. Baba's mission is to awaken man to that realization through the age-old message of love.

Baba also provides the ready example when one is faced by a puzzling decision. In essence, however, one does not know how Baba achieves the results he so clearly elicits from the human instrument. All that the individual senses is a powerful force sweeping through the snarls of life, simplifying and freeing the inner being in a manner that he instinctively trusts.

One of the great wonders of contact with Baba is acceptance. "He invites people to look at themselves, to accept their egotistic selves not as good or bad, clever or stupid, successful or unsuccessful, but as illusions of their true selves, and to cease to identify themselves with the illusion."

The history of man's search for his soul has produced few works dealing with the technique for the soul's discovery. Meher Baba's *Discourses* are a major contribution to that small body of literature. In this work, given to his close disciples in the period 1938-1943, he describes the means for incorporating daily life into one's spiritual ongoing. He also outlines the structure of Creation, but only to clarify the relationship of the aspirant to the Master. In his classic later work, *God Speaks*,* Meher Baba describes in detail the vertical system of God, His will to know Himself consciously, and the purpose of Creation in that will-to-consciousness. The *Discourses* on the other hand are the practical guide for the aspirant as he slowly finds his way back to Oneness, after having developed consciousness through the deeps of evolution.

While the *Discourses* provide detailed descriptions of the Path and its disciplines, the reader will discover

*Dodd, Mead and Co. New York, N. Y. 1955.
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that they are in no way a do-it-yourself manual for spiritual evolution. Rather, they are a constant, firm reminder of the need for a Master on this Path of apparent return to Oneness. The Master is the knowing guide who has already traversed the Path, who provides with infinite patience the security and steady pace that can lead to the goal. While Baba admits the possibility of achieving progress without such a guide, he makes it clear that it is fraught with almost insurmountable problems.

To one who debates allying himself with a teacher of the inner processes, the *Discourses* provide invaluable insight. To one who senses that life is to be lived for its positive contribution to the discovery of the inner being, Baba provides the unarguable description of one who knows.

"These discourses cover a wide field, but they begin and end with the reader himself. This is therefore a dangerous book. Baba is dangerous, as all who have been near him know Baba invites those who listen to him to do the impossible because only the impossible has divine meaning."

Meher Baba lives quietly in the midst of the greatest activity, often raising an almost impenetrable barrier to guard the seclusion in which he performs his universal work, near Ahmednagar. On occasion he allows individuals and small groups to penetrate the barrier to receive the spark of love, more rarely he opens the gates wide and loosens a broad river of warmth on those who are lucky enough to know that the Avatar is in the world.

Ivy Oneita Duce
Don E. Stevens
Editors

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The Seven Realities of Meher Baba's Teaching

EXISTENCE, LOVE, SACRIFICE, RENUNCIATION,
KNOWLEDGE, CONTROL AND SURRENDER

Meher Baba's teaching gives no importance to creed, dogma, caste or the performance of religious ceremonies and rites, but does to the UNDERSTANDING of the following seven Realities:

1. The only **Real Existence** is that of the One and only God Who is the Self in every (finite) self.
2. The only **Real Love** is the Love for this Infinity (God), which arouses an intense longing to see, know and become one with its Truth (God).
3. The only **Real Sacrifice** is that in which, in pursuance of this Love, all things—body, mind, position, welfare and even life itself—are sacrificed.
4. The only **Real Renunciation** is that which abandons, even in the midst of worldly duties, all selfish thoughts and desires.
5. The only **Real Knowledge** is the Knowledge that God is the inner dweller in good people and in so-called bad, in saint and in so-called sinner. This Knowledge requires you to help all equally as circumstances demand without expectation of reward, and when compelled to take part in a dispute, to act without the slightest trace of enmity or hatred; to try to make

others happy with brotherly or sisterly feeling for each one; and to harm no one in thought, word or deed, not even those who harm you.

6. The only **Real Control** is the discipline of the senses to abstain from indulgence in low desires, which alone ensures absolute purity of character.

7. The only **Real Surrender** is that in which poise is undisturbed by any adverse circumstance, and the individual, amidst every kind of hardship, is resigned with perfect calm to the will of God.

The New Humanity

AS in all great critical periods of human history, humanity is now going through the agonising travail of spiritual rebirth. Great forces of destruction

The divine plan are afoot and seem to be dominant at the moment, but constructive and creative forces which will redeem humanity are also being released through several channels. Although the working of these forces of light is chiefly silent, they are eventually bound to bring about those transformations which will make the further spiritual advance of humanity safe and steady. *It is all a part of the divine plan, which is to give to the hungry and weary world a fresh dispensation of the eternal and only Truth.*

At present the urgent problem facing humanity is to devise ways and means of eliminating competition, conflict and rivalry in all the subtle and gross forms

War a symptom of graver causes which they assume in the various spheres of life. Military wars are, of course, the most

obvious sources of chaos and destruction. However, *wars in themselves do not constitute the central problem for humanity, but are rather the external symptoms of something graver at their root.* Wars and the suffering they bring cannot be completely avoided by mere propaganda against war; if they are to disappear from human his-

tory it will be necessary to tackle their root-cause. Even when military wars are not being waged, individuals or groups of individuals are constantly engaged in *economic or some other subtle form of warfare*. Military wars, with all the cruelty which they involve, arise only when these underground causes are aggravated.

The root-cause of the chaos which precipitates itself in wars is that most persons are in the grip of egoism and selfish considerations, and they express their *egoism*

Ultimate cause of chaos is in egoism and self-interest

and self-interest individually as well as collectively. *This is the life of illusory values in which men are caught.* To face the Truth

is to realise that life is one, in and through its manifold manifestations. To have this understanding is to forget the limiting self in the realisation of the unity of life.

With the dawn of true understanding the problem of wars would immediately disappear. *Wars have to be so clearly seen as both unnecessary and unreasonable that the*

Wars unnecessary and unreasonable

immediate problem would not be how to stop wars but to wage them spiritually against the attitude of

mind responsible for such a cruel and painful state of things. In the light of the Truth of the unity of all life, co-operative and harmonious action becomes natural and inevitable. Hence, the chief task before those who are deeply concerned with the rebuilding of humanity, is to do their utmost to dispel the spiritual ignorance which envelops humanity.

Wars do not arise merely to secure material adjustment; they are often the product of uncritical identification with narrow interests which through association *come to be included in that part of the world which is re-*

Self-interest must be eliminated from all spheres of life

garded as "mine." *Material adjustment is only part of the wider problem of establishing spiritual adjustment, but spiritual adjustment requires the elimination of self not only from the material aspects of life but also from those spheres which affect the intellectual, emotional and cultural life of man.*

To understand the problem of humanity as merely a problem of bread is to reduce humanity to the level of animality. But even when man sets himself to the limited task of securing purely material adjustment, he can only succeed in this attempt if he has spiritual understanding.

Even material adjustment requires spiritual understanding

Economic adjustment is impossible unless people realise that there can be no planned and co-operative action in economic matters until self-interest gives place to self-giving love. Otherwise, with the best of equipment and efficiency in the material spheres, humanity cannot avoid conflict and insufficiency.

The NEW HUMANITY, which emerges from the travail of present struggle and suffering, will not ignore science or its practical attainments. It is a mistake to look

Rightful place of science upon science as anti-spiritual. *Science is a help or hindrance to spirituality according to the use to which it is put.*

Just as true art expresses spirituality, so science, when properly handled, can be the expression and fulfillment of the spirit. Scientific truths concerning the physical body and its life in the gross world can become a medium for the soul to know itself; but to serve this purpose they must be properly fitted into the larger spiritual understanding. This includes a steady perception of true and lasting values. In the absence of such spiritual understanding, scientific truths and attainments are liable to be used for mutual destruction and for a life which will tend to strengthen the chains which

bind the spirit. All-sided progress of humanity can be assured only if science and religion proceed hand in hand.

The coming civilisation of the New Humanity shall be ensouled not by dry intellectual doctrines, but by living spiritual experience. Spiritual experience has a hold on the deeper

Need for spiritual experience

truths which are inaccessible to mere intellect; it cannot be born of unaided intellect.

Spiritual truth can often be stated and expressed through the intellect, and the intellect surely is of some help for the communication of spiritual experience. But by itself, the intellect is insufficient to enable man to have spiritual experience or to communicate it to others. If two persons have had headaches they can co-operatively examine their experience of headache and make it explicit to themselves through the work of the intellect. If a person has never experienced a headache, no amount of intellectual explanation will suffice for making him understand what a headache is. Intellectual explanation can never be a substitute for spiritual experience; it can at best prepare the ground for it.

Spiritual experience involves more than can be grasped by mere intellect. This is often emphasised by calling it a mystical experience. Mysticism is often

Nature and place of spiritual experience

regarded as something anti-intellectual, obscure and confused, or impractical and un-

connected with experience. In fact, true mysticism is none of these. *There is nothing irrational in true mysticism when it is, as it should be, a vision of Reality. It is a form of perception which is absolutely unclouded, and so practical that it can be lived every moment of life and expressed in every-day duties. Its connection with experience is so deep that, in one*

sense, it is the final understanding of all experience. When spiritual experience is described as mystical one should not assume that it is something supernatural or entirely beyond the grasp of human consciousness. All that is meant is that it is not accessible to limited human intellect until it transcends its limits and is illumined by direct realisation of the Infinite. Christ pointed out the way to spiritual experience when he said, "Leave all and follow me." This means that man must leave limitations and establish himself in the infinite life of God. Real spiritual experience involves not only realisation of the soul on higher planes, but also a right attitude towards worldly duties. If it loses its connection with the different phases of life, what we have is a neurotic reaction that is far from being a spiritual experience.

The spiritual experience that is to enliven and energise the New Humanity cannot be a reaction to the stern and uncompromising demands made by the realities of life. Those without the capacity for adjustment to the flow of life have a tendency to recoil from the realities of life and to seek shelter and protection in a self-created fortress of illusions.

**Spiritual experience
not born of escape**

Such reaction is an attempt to perpetuate one's separate existence by protecting it from the demands made by life. It can only give a pseudo-solution to the problems of life by providing a false sense of security and self-completeness. It is not even an advance towards the real and lasting solution; on the contrary, it is a side-tracking from the true Path. *Man will be dislodged again and again from his illusory shelters by fresh and irresistible waves of life, and will invite upon himself fresh forms of suffering by seeking to protect his separative existence through escape.*

Just as a person may seek to hold onto his separative experience through escape, he may also seek to hold it through uncritical identification with forms, ceremonies and rituals or with traditions and conventions. **New Humanity will not be attached to external forms**

Forms, ceremonies and rituals, traditions and conventions are in most cases fetters to the release of infinite life. If they were a pliant medium for the expression of unlimited life, they would be an asset rather than a handicap for securing the fulfillment of divine life on earth; but they mostly have a tendency to gather prestige and claims in their own right, independently of the life which they might express. When this happens, any attachment to them must eventually lead to a drastic curtailment and restriction of life. *The New Humanity will be freed from a life of limitations, allowing unhampered scope for the creative life of the spirit; and it will break the attachment to external forms and learn to subordinate them to the claims of the spirit.* The limited life of illusions and false values will then be replaced by unlimited life in the Truth, and the limitations, through which the separative self lives, will wither away at the touch of true understanding.

Just as a person may seek to hold onto his separative existence through escape or identification with external forms, he may seek to hold it through identification with some narrow class, creed, sect or religion, or with the divisions based upon sex. Here the individual may

Identification with narrow group is a form of limited self

seem to have lost his separative existence through identification with a larger whole. But, in fact, he is often expressing his separative existence through such an identification, which enables him to delight in his feeling of

being separate from others who belong to another class, nationality, creed, sect, religion or sex.

Separative existence derives its being and strength by identifying itself with one opposite and contrasting itself with the other. A man may seek to protect his separate existence through identification with one ideology rather than another or with his conception of good as contrasted with his idea of evil. What results from identification with narrow groups or limited ideals is not a real merging of the separative self, but only a semblance of it. A real merging of the limited self in the ocean of universal life involves complete surrender of separative existence in all its forms.

The large mass of humanity is caught up in the clutches of separative and assertive tendencies. For one who is overpowered by the spectacle of these fetters of humanity, there is bound to be nothing but unrelieved despair about its future. One must look deeper into the realities of the day if one is to get a correct perspective on the present distress of humanity. The real possibilities of the New Humanity are hidden to those who look only at the surface of the world-situation, but they exist and only need the spark of spiritual understanding to come into full play and effect. The forces of lust, hate and greed produce incalculable suffering and chaos, but *the one redeeming feature about human nature is that even in the midst of disruptive forces there invariably exists some form of love.*

Even wars require co-operative functioning, but the scope of this co-operative functioning is artificially restricted by identification with a limited group or ideal. **Love must be free from limitations** *Wars often are carried on by a*

form of love, but it is a love which has not been understood properly. In order that love should come into its own, it must be untrammelled and unlimited. Love does exist in all phases of human life, but it is latent or is limited and poisoned by personal ambition, racial pride, narrow loyalties and rivalries, and attachment to sex, nationality, sect, caste or religion. If there is to be a resurrection of humanity, the heart of man will have to be unlocked so that a new love is born into it—a love which knows no corruption and is entirely free from individual or collective greed.

The New Humanity will come into existence through a release of love in measureless abundance, and this release of love can come through spiritual

Love self-communicative

awakening brought about by the Masters. *Love cannot be born of mere determination; through*

the exercise of will one can at best be dutiful. Through struggle and effort, one may succeed in assuring that one's external action is in conformity with one's concept of what is right; but such action is spiritually barren because it lacks the inward beauty of spontaneous love. Love has to spring spontaneously from within; it is in no way amenable to any form of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together, but while love cannot be forced upon anyone, it can be awakened through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative; those who do not have it catch it from those who have it. Those who receive love from others cannot be its recipients without giving a response which, in itself, is the nature of love. True love is unconquerable and irresistible. It goes on gathering power and spreading itself until eventually it transforms everyone it touches. Humanity will attain to a new mode of being and life through the free and unhampered interplay of pure love from heart to heart.

When it is recognised that there are no claims greater than

the claims of the universal divine life which, without exception, includes everyone and everything, love will not only establish

**Redemption of
 humanity through
 divine love**

peace, harmony and happiness in social, national and international spheres, but it will shine in its own purity and beauty. Divine love is

unassailable to the onslaughts of duality and is an expression of divinity itself. It is through divine love that the New Humanity will tune in with the divine plan. Divine love will not only introduce imperishable sweetness and infinite bliss into personal life, but it will also make possible an era of New Humanity. *Through divine love the New Humanity will learn the art of co-operative and harmonious life; it will free itself from the tyranny of dead forms and release the creative life of spiritual wisdom; it will shed all illusions and get established in the Truth; it will enjoy peace and abiding happiness; it will be initiated in the life of Eternity.*

Selfishness

SELFISHNESS comes into existence owing to the tendency of the desires to find fulfillment in action and experience. It is born of fundamental ignorance about one's own true

Analysis of selfishness

Human consciousness is clouded by the accumulation of various types of impressions deposited by the long course of the evolution of consciousness. These impressions express themselves as desires, and the range of the operation of consciousness is strictly limited by these desires. The *sanskaras* or impressions form an enclosure around the possible field of consciousness. The circle of *sanskaras* constitutes that limited area in which alone the individual consciousness can be focussed. Some of the desires have mere latency of action, but others can actually translate themselves into action. The capacity of a desire to find expression in conduct depends upon the intensity and the amount of the *sanskaras* connected with it. To use a geometrical metaphor, we might say that when a desire passes into action, it traverses a distance which is equal to the radius of a circle describing the boundary of the *sanskaras* connected with it. When a desire gathers sufficient strength, it projects itself into action for getting fulfilled.

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The range of selfishness is equal to the range of

desires. Owing to the hindrance of multifarious desires, it becomes impossible for the soul to find free and full

Wanting ends in dissatisfaction expression of its true being, and life becomes self-centred and narrow. The entire life of

the personal ego is continually in the grip of wanting, i. e., an attempt to seek fulfillment of desires through things that change and vanish. But *there can be no real fulfillment through the transient things*. The satisfaction derived from the fleeting things of life is not lasting and the wants of man remain unfulfilled. There is thus a general sense of dissatisfaction accompanied by all kinds of worries.

The chief forms in which the frustrated ego finds expression are lust, greed and anger. Lust is very much like greed in many respects, but it differs in the manner of its fulfillment, which is di-

Lust, greed and anger rectly related to the gross sphere. Lust finds its expression through the medium of the physical body and is concerned with the flesh. It is a form of entanglement with the *gross* sphere. Greed is a state of restlessness of the heart, and it consists mainly of craving for power and possessions. Possessions and power are sought for the fulfillment of desires. Man is only partially satisfied in his attempt to have the fulfillment of his desires, and this partial satisfaction fans and increases the flame of craving instead of extinguishing it. Thus greed always finds an endless field of conquest and leaves the man endlessly dissatisfied. The chief expressions of greed are related to the emotional part of man. It is a form of entanglement with the *subtle* sphere. Anger is the fume of an irritated mind. It is caused by the thwarting of desires. It feeds the limited ego and is used for domination and aggression. It aims at removing the obstacles exist-

ing in the fulfillment of desires. The frenzy of anger nourishes egoism and conceit and it is the greatest benefactor of the limited ego. Mind is the seat of anger, and its expressions are mostly through the activities of the mind. Anger is a form of *mental* entanglement. Lust, greed and anger respectively have body, heart and mind as their vehicles of expression.

Man experiences disappointment through lust, greed and anger; and the frustrated ego, in its turn, seeks further gratification through lust, greed and anger.

The vicious circle Consciousness is thus caught up in a *vicious circle of endless disappointment*. Disappointment comes into existence when either lust, greed or anger is thwarted in its expression. It is thus a general reaction of the gross, subtle and mental entanglement. It is a depression caused by the non-fulfillment of lust, greed and anger which, together, are co-extensive with selfishness. Selfishness, which is the common basis of these three ingredient vices, is thus the ultimate cause of disappointment and worries. It defeats itself. It seeks fulfillment through desires but succeeds only in arriving at unending dissatisfaction.

Selfishness inevitably leads to dissatisfaction and disappointment, because desires are endless. The problem of happiness is, therefore, the problem of dropping

out desires. Desires, however, cannot be effectively overcome through mechanical repression. They can be annihilated only through knowledge. If you dive deep in the realm of thoughts and think seriously for just a few minutes, you will realise the emptiness of desires. Think of what you have enjoyed all these years and what you have suffered. All that you have enjoyed through life is today nil. All that you have

suffered through life is also nothing in the present. All was illusory. It is your right to be happy and yet you create your own unhappiness by wanting things. Wanting is the source of perpetual restlessness. If you do not get the thing you wanted, you are disappointed. And if you get it, you want more and more of it and become unhappy. Say, "I do not want anything," and be happy. The continuous realisation of the futility of wants will eventually lead you to Knowledge. This Self-knowledge will give you the freedom from wants which leads to the road to abiding happiness.

Wants should be carefully distinguished from needs. Pride and anger, greed and lust are all different from needs. You might think, "I need all that I want,"

Renunciation of wants but this is a mistake. If you are thirsty in a desert, what

you need is good water, not lemonade. As long as man has a body there will be some needs, and it is necessary to meet these needs. But wants are an outcome of infatuated imagination. They must be scrupulously killed if there is to be any happiness. As the very being of selfishness consists of desires, *renunciation of wants becomes a process of death*. Dying in the ordinary sense means parting with the physical body, but dying in the real sense means renunciation of low sense-desires. The priests prepare men for false death by painting gloomy pictures of hell and heaven, but their death is illusory, as life is one unbroken continuity. The real death consists of the cessation of desires, and it comes by gradual stages.

The dawn of love facilitates the death of selfishness. Being is dying by loving. If you cannot love one another, how can you love even those who torture you? The

Love and service limits of selfishness are created by ignorance. When a man

realises that he can have a more glorious satisfaction by widening the sphere of his interest and activities, he is heading towards the life of service. At this stage he entertains many good desires. He wants to make others happy by relieving distress and helping them. And though even in such good desires there is often an indirect and latent reference to the self, narrow selfishness has no grip over good deeds. Even good desires may, in a sense, be said to be a form of enlightened and extended selfishness, for, like bad desires, they too move within the domain of duality. But as man entertains good desires his selfishness embraces a larger conception which eventually brings about its own extinction. Instead of merely trying to be luminous, arrestive and possessive, man learns to be useful to others.

The desires which enter into a constitution of the personal ego are either good or bad. Bad desires are ordinarily referred to as forms of selfishness and good

The arising of selfishness

desires are referred to as forms of selflessness. But there is no hard and fast line dividing selfishness from selflessness. Both move in the domain of duality and, from the ultimate point of view which transcends the opposites of good and bad, the distinction between selfishness and selflessness is chiefly one of range. Selfishness and selflessness are two phases of the life of the personal ego, and these two phases are continuous with each other. Selfishness arises when all the desires are centred around the narrow individuality. Selflessness arises when this crude organisation of desires suffers disintegration and there is a general dispersing of desires with the result that they cover a much wider sphere. Selfishness is the narrowing down of interests to a limited field; selflessness is the extension of interests over a wide field. To put it paradoxically, selfishness is

a restricted form of selflessness, and selflessness is the drawing out of selfishness into a wide sphere of activity.

Selfishness must be transmuted into selflessness before the domain of duality is completely transcended. Persistent and continuous performance of good deeds wears out selfish-

Transformation of selfishness into selflessness

ness. Selfishness extended and expressed in the form of good deeds becomes the instrument of its own destruction. *The good*

is the main link between selfishness thriving and dying. Selfishness, which in the beginning is the father of evil tendencies, becomes through good deeds the hero of its own defeat. When the evil tendencies are completely replaced by good tendencies, selfishness is transformed into selflessness, i. e., individual selfishness loses itself in universal interest. Though this selfless and good life is also bound by the opposites, goodness is a necessary step towards freedom from the opposites. Goodness is the means by which the soul annihilates its own ignorance.

From the good the soul passes on to God. Selflessness is merged into *Universal Selfhood*, which is beyond good and bad, virtue and vice and all the other dual

Universal Selfhood

aspects of *Maya*. The height of selflessness is the beginning of

the feeling of oneness with all. In the state of liberation there is neither selfishness nor selflessness in the ordinary sense, but both of these are taken up and merged into the feeling of *selfness for all*. Realisation of the unity of all is accompanied by peace and unfathomable bliss. It does not in any way lead either to spiritual stagnation or to the obliteration of relative values. *Selfness for all brings about undisturbed harmony without loss of discrimination, and unshakable peace without indifference to the surroundings.* This selfness for all is not an outcome of merely subjective synthesis. It is a result of an actual attainment of union

with the Ultimate Reality which includes all.

Open your heart by weeding out all desires and by harbouring only one longing—the longing for union with the Ultimate Reality. The Ultimate Reality is not

**Union with the
Ultimate Reality**

to be sought in the changing things of external environment, but in one's own being.

Every time your soul intends to enter your human heart it finds the doors locked and the inside too full of desires. Do not keep the doors of your hearts closed. Everywhere there is the source of abiding bliss, and yet all are miserable because of desires born of ignorance. The goal of lasting happiness shines forth fully only when the limited ego, with all its desires, finds its complete and final extinction.

Renunciation of desires does not mean asceticism or a merely negative attitude to life. Any such negation of life would make man inhuman. Divinity is not de-

**Spirituality is a
positive attitude
towards life**

void of humanity. Spirituality must make man more human. It is a positive attitude of releasing all that is good, noble

and beautiful in man. It also contributes to all that is gracious and lovely in the environment. It does not require the external renunciation of worldly activities or the avoiding of duties and responsibilities. It only requires that, while performing the worldly activities or discharging the responsibilities arising from the specific place and position of the individual, the inner spirit should remain free from the burden of desires. Perfection consists in remaining free from the entanglements of duality. Such freedom from entanglements is the most essential requirement of unhindered creativity. But this freedom cannot be attained by running away from life for fear of entanglement. This would mean denial of life.

Perfection does not consist in shrinking from the dual expressions of nature. The attempt to escape from entanglement implies fear of life. Spirituality consists in meeting life adequately and fully without being overpowered by the opposites. It must assert its dominion over all illusions—however attractive or powerful. Without avoiding contact with the different forms of life, a perfect man functions with complete detachment in the midst of intense activity.

God and the Individual

GOD is infinite. He is beyond the opposites of good and bad, right and wrong, virtue and vice, birth and death, pleasures and suffering. Such dual aspects do not belong to God. If we take God as one separate entity, He becomes one term in relational existence. Just as good is the counterpart of bad, God becomes the counterpart of not-God, and the Infinite comes to be looked upon as the opposite of the finite. When we talk of the Infinite and the finite, we are referring to them as two, and the Infinite has already become the second part of the duality. But the Infinite belongs to the non-dual order of being. If the Infinite is looked upon as the counterpart of the finite, it is strictly speaking no longer infinite but a species of the finite, for it stands outside the finite as its opposite and is thus limited. *Since the Infinite cannot be the second part of the finite, the apparent existence of the finite is false.* The Infinite alone exists. God cannot be brought down to the domain of duality. There is only one being in reality and it is the Universal Soul. The existence of the finite or the limited is only apparent or imaginary.

You are infinite. You are really everywhere. But you think that you are the body, and therefore consider yourself limited. If you think you are the body which is

Apparent existence of the finite

sitting, you do not know your true nature. If you were to look within and experience your own soul in its true nature you would realise that you are infinite and beyond all creation. But you identify yourself with the body. This false identification is due to ignorance which makes itself effective through the medium of the mind. Ordinary man thinks that he is the physical body. A spiritually advanced man thinks that he is the subtle body. The saint thinks that he is the mind. But in none of them is the soul having direct self-knowledge. It is not a case of pure thinking unmixed with illusion. The soul as soul is infinite—aloof from mind or body—but owing to ignorance, the soul comes under the sway of the mind and becomes a “thinker,” sometimes identifying itself with the body and sometimes with the mind. From the limited point of view of a person who has not gone beyond the domain of *maya*, there are numberless individuals. It seems that there are as many individuals as there are minds and bodies. In fact, there is only one Universal Soul, but the individual thinks that he is different from other individuals. One and the same soul is ultimately behind the minds of seemingly different individuals, and through them it has the multifarious experiences of duality. The One *in* the many comes to experience itself as one *of* the many. This is due to imagination or false thinking.

Thinking becomes false owing to the interference of *sanskaras* accumulated during the process of the evolution of consciousness. The function of consciousness is perverted by the operation of *sanskaras* which manifest themselves as desires. Through many lives, consciousness is continually being burdened

The cause of false thinking

by the after-effects of experience. The perception of the soul is limited by these after-effects. The thinking of the soul cannot break through the hedge created by *sanskaras*, and *consciousness becomes a helpless captive of illusions projected by its own false thinking*. This falsification of thought is present not only in cases where consciousness is partly developed, but also in man, where it is fully developed.

The progressive evolution of consciousness beginning with the stone stage culminates in man. The history of evolution is the history of a gradual development of consciousness. The fruit of evolution is full consciousness, which is characteristic of man. But even this full consciousness is like a mirror covered by dust. Owing to the operation of *sanskaras*, it does not yield clear and true knowledge of the nature of the soul. Though fully developed, it yields not truth but imaginative construction, since its free functioning is hindered by the weight of the *sanskaras*. Moreover it cannot extend beyond the cage created by its desires, and therefore is limited in its scope.

The boundary in which consciousness can move is prescribed by the *sanskaras*, and the functioning of consciousness is also determined by the desires. As desires

Individualisation of consciousness

aim at self-satisfaction, the whole consciousness becomes self-centred and individualised. *The individualisation of consciousness may in a sense be said to be the effect of the vortex of desires*. The soul gets enmeshed in the desires and cannot step out of the circumscribed individuality constituted by these desires. It imagines these barriers and becomes *self-hypnotised*. It looks upon itself as being limited and separate from other individuals. It gets entangled in

individualistic existence and imagines a world of manifold separateness composed of many individuals with their respective minds and bodies.

When the rays of the sun are made to pass through a prism, they get dispersed and become separate owing to refraction. If each of these rays had consciousness, it

would consider itself as being separate from the other rays, forgetting entirely that at source and on the other side of

**Separateness exists
 only in imagination**

the prism it had no separate existence. In the same way, the One Being descends into the domain of *maya* and assumes a multiplicity which does not in fact exist. The separateness of individuals does not exist in *reality* but only in *imagination*. The one Universal Soul imagines separateness in itself, and out of this division there arises the thought of "I" and "mine" as opposed to "you" and "yours". Although the soul is in reality an undivided and absolute unity, it appears as being manifold and divided owing to the working of its own imagination. Imagination is not a reality. Even in its highest flight, it is a departure from truth. It is anything but the truth. The experience which the soul gathers in terms of the individualised ego is all imagination. It is a misapprehension of the soul. Out of the imagination of the Universal Soul are born many individuals. This is *maya* or ignorance.

Side by side with the birth of the separate and limited individuality there also comes into existence the objective universe. As the limited individuality has

Objective universe separate existence not in fact but only in imagination, the

objective universe also has no independent and separate reality. It is the One Universal Self appearing in the second role of manifestation through the attributes.

When the soul descends into the domain of *maya*, it takes upon itself the limitations of manifold existence. This self-limitation of the soul might be looked upon as its self-sacrifice on the altar of consciousness. Although it eternally remains the same Infinite Absolute, it suffers a kind of *timeless* contraction through its apparent descent into the world of time, variety and evolution. What really evolves, however, is not the soul itself but only the consciousness which, owing to its limitations, gives rise to the limited individuality.

The history of the limited individuality is a history of the development of a triple entanglement with mind, energy and matter (body). Duality prevails in all these

Triple entanglement and duality domains and the soul gets entangled therein although it is in essence beyond duality.

Duality implies the existence of opposites limiting and balancing each other through mutual tension. Good and bad, virtue and vice are examples of such opposites. The ignorant soul enmeshed in duality is in the clutches of both good and bad. The duality of good and bad arises due to ignorance, but once entangled with it, the soul comes under its sway. During the evolution of the triple entanglement with matter (body), energy and mind, the ignorant soul is continually in the grip of wanting. It wants the good and bad of the *gross* world; it wants the good and bad of the *subtle* world; and it wants the good and bad of the *mental* world; and owing to the distinction of good and bad, wanting itself becomes good and bad. Wanting thus comes to be inevitably limited by the perpetual tension of the opposites. This gives rise to unending oscillation from one state to another, without arriving at the unlimited state which can only be discovered in the unchanging, eternal aspect of life. The Infinite is to be sought beyond

the domain of duality. This becomes possible only when consciousness can emerge from the limited individuality by breaking through the barriers of *sanskaras*.

We have seen that the possible field of consciousness is limited by the *sanskaras*. This limitation creates a division of the human psyche into two parts. One part falls within the range of consciousness and the other part falls beyond it. The unconscious part, in its full extent, is identical with the power which

**Chasm between
consciousness and
unconsciousness**

is behind matter. It is referred to as God by the orthodox religions. The Ultimate Reality which is symbolically represented through such concepts can be known fully only by *bringing the unconscious into consciousness*. An extension of consciousness consists in being conscious of that which was formerly a part of the unconscious. The progressive conquest of the unconscious by the conscious culminates in *consummate* consciousness which is unlimited in scope and unhindered in function. Between this highest state of consciousness and the limited—though full—consciousness of average humanity, there are about forty-nine degrees of illumined consciousness. They mark the important stages of growing illumination.

The gulf between the clouded consciousness of average humanity and the fully illumined consciousness of a Perfect Master is created by *sanskaras* which give rise to egoism. These can be removed through perfect character, devotion and selfless service, but the best results in this direction are attained through the help of a Perfect Master. Spiritual advancement consists not in the further *development* of consciousness (for it is already fully developed in man), but in the *emancipation* of

Spiritual advancement

consciousness from the bondage of *sanskaras*. Although, in essence, consciousness is the same in all the different states of existence, it can never be consummate unless it can reflect the knowledge of Infinity without the least shadow of ignorance, and also cover the whole extent of creation illumining the different spheres of existence.

Every time you go to sleep you are unconsciously united with the Infinite Reality. This unification involves the extension of unconsciousness over conscious-

Deep sleep

ness. It thus bridges over the chasm between the unconscious and the conscious. But being unconscious of this union, you do not consciously derive any benefit from it. This is the reason why, when you wake up again from deep sleep, you become aware of the self-same hum-drum individual, and you begin to act and experience exactly as you acted and experienced before going to sleep. If your union with the Supreme Reality had been a conscious union, you would have awakened into a completely new and infinitely rich life.

A Perfect Master is consciously united with the Infinite Reality. In his case the chasm between consciousness and unconsciousness is bridged, not by the

Conscious union with Reality

extension of the unconscious over the conscious, as in the man who enjoys deep sleep, but by the extension of consciousness over unconsciousness. The waxing and waning of consciousness is applicable only to the limited individual. In the case of the Perfect Master, the conquest of the unconscious by the conscious is final and permanent and, therefore, his state of self-knowledge is continuous and unbroken and remains the same at all times without any diminution. From this you can see that the Perfect Master never

sleeps in the ordinary sense of the word. When he rests his body he experiences no gap in his consciousness.

In the state of perfection, full consciousness becomes consummate by the disappearance of all obstacles to illumination. The conquest of the unconscious by the

The state of perfection conscious is complete, and the person continuously dwells in the full blaze of illumination or

as one with illumination. He becomes illumination itself. As long as a person remains under the sway of duality and looks upon manifold experience as being true and final, he has not traversed the domain of ignorance. In the state of final understanding a person realizes that the Infinite, which is One without a second, is the only reality. The Infinite pervades and includes all existence leaving nothing as its rival. A person who has such realisation has attained the highest state of consciousness. In this state the full consciousness which is the fruit of evolution is retained, but the limitations of *sanskaras* and desires are completely transcended. The limited individuality, which is the creation of ignorance, is transformed into the divine individuality which is unlimited. The illimitable consciousness of the Universal Soul becomes individualised in this focus without giving rise to any form of illusion. The person is free from all self-centred desires and he becomes the medium of the spontaneous flow of the supreme and universal will which expresses divinity. *Individuality becomes limitless by the disappearance of ignorance.* As it is unimpaired by the separateness of *maya* and unentangled in its duality, it enjoys the state of liberation in which there is objectless awareness, pure being and unclouded joy. Such a person has no longer any illusions which perplex and bewilder man. In one sense he is dead. The personal ego, which is the source of the sense

of separateness, has been forever annihilated. But in another sense, he is alive forevermore with unconquerable love and eternal bliss. He has infinite power and wisdom, and the whole universe is to him a field for his spiritual work of perfecting mankind.

The Beginning and the End of Creation

AS long as the human mind does not directly experience Ultimate Reality as it is, the mind is baffled in every attempt to explain the origin and purpose of creation. The ancient past **Whence and whither?** seems to be shrouded in inscrutable mystery and the future seems to be a completely sealed book. The human mind can at best make brilliant conjectures about the past and the future of the universe, because it is bound by the spell of *Maya*. It can neither arrive at final knowledge on these points nor can it remain content with ignorance about them. "Whence?" and "Whither?" are the two everlasting and poignant queries which make the human mind divinely restless.

The human mind cannot reconcile itself to infinite regress in its search for the origin of the world, nor can it reconcile itself to endless change without a goal.

The beginning and the end Evolution is unintelligible if it has no initial cause, and it is deprived of all direction and meaning if it all does not lead to a terminus. The very questions "Whence?" and "Whither?" presuppose the beginning and end of this evolving creation. *The beginning of evolution is the beginning of time and the end of evolution is the end of time.* Evolution has both beginning

and end because time has both beginning and end.

Between the beginning and the end of this changing world there are many cycles, but there is, in and through these cycles, a continuity of cosmic evolution. The real termination of the evolutionary process is called *Mahapralaya* or the final annihilation of the world, when the world becomes what it was in the beginning, namely *nothing*. The *Mahapralaya* of the world may be compared with the sleep of a man. Just as the varied world of experience completely disappears for the man who is in deep sleep, the entire objective cosmos which is the creation of *Maya* vanishes into nothingness at the time of *Mahapralaya*. It is as if the universe had never existed at all.

Even during the evolutionary period the universe is in itself nothing but imagination. There is in fact only one indivisible and eternal Reality and it has

**Reality is timeless
and absolute**

neither beginning nor end.
It is beyond time. From the
point of view of this timeless

Reality the whole time-process is purely imaginary, and billions of years which have passed and billions of years which are to pass do not have even the value of a second. It is as if they had not existed at all.

So the manifold and evolving universe cannot be said to be a real outcome of this one Reality. If it were an outcome of this one Reality, Reality would be either a relative term or a composite being, which it is not. The one Reality is absolute.

The one Reality includes in itself *all* existence. It is Everything, but it has Nothing as its shadow. The idea of all-inclusive existence implies that it leaves

Reality and nothing

nothing outside its being.

When you analyse the idea of being, you arrive by implication at the idea of that

which does not exist. This idea of non-existence or "Nothing" helps you to define clearly our notion of being. *The complementary aspect of Being is thus Non-Being or Nothing.* But "Nothing" cannot be looked upon as having its own separate and independent existence. It is nothing in itself. Nor can it, in itself, be a cause of anything. The manifold and evolving universe cannot be the outcome of "Nothing" taken by itself, and you have seen that it also cannot be the outcome of the one Reality. How then does the manifold and evolving universe arise?

The manifold evolving universe arises from the mixing of the one Reality and "Nothing." It springs out of "Nothing" when this "Nothing" is taken against

Reality and the universe the background of the one Reality. But this should not be taken to mean that the

universe is partly the outcome of the one Reality, or that it has an element of Reality. It is an outcome of "Nothing" and is nothing. It only *seems* to have existence. Its apparent existence is due to the one Reality which is, as it were, behind "Nothing." *When "Nothing" is added to the one Reality, the result is the manifold and evolving universe.*

The one Reality which is infinite and absolute does not thereby suffer any modification. It is absolute and is as such entirely unaffected by any addition or subtraction. The one Reality remains what it was, complete and absolute in itself and unconcerned and unconnected with the panorama of creation that springs out of "Nothing." "Nothing" might be compared to the value of "zero" in mathematics. In itself it has no positive value, but when it is added to another number it gives rise to the many. In the same way the manifold and evolving universe springs out of "Noth-

ing" when it is combined with the one Reality.

The whole evolutionary process is within the domain of imagination. When in imagination the one ocean of Reality gets apparently disturbed, there arises

**Imagined division
between self and en-
vironment leads to
evolving duality**

the manifold world of separate centres of consciousness. This involves the basic division of life into the *self* and *not-self*, or the "I" and its environ-

ment. Owing to the falseness and the incompleteness of this limited self (which is only an imagined part of a really indivisible totality), consciousness cannot remain content with eternal identification with it. Thus consciousness is trapped in ceaseless restlessness, forcing it to attempt identification with the not-self. That portion of the not-self, or the environment with which consciousness succeeds in identifying itself, gets affiliated with the self in the form of "mine"; and that portion of the not-self, with which it does not succeed in identifying itself, becomes irreducible environment which inevitably creates a limit and an opposition to the self.

Thus consciousness arrives not at the *termination* of its limiting duality but at its *transformation*. As long as consciousness is subject to the working of vitiating imagination, it cannot successfully put an end to this duality, and all the varied attempts which it makes for the assimilation of the not-self (or the environment) result merely in the replacement of the initial duality by other innumerable novel forms of the *same* duality. The acceptance and the rejection of certain portions of the environment express themselves respectively as "wanting" and "not-wanting," thus giving rise to the opposites of pleasure and pain, good and bad, etc. But neither acceptance nor rejection can lead to freedom from duality, and consciousness therefore finds itself

engaged in *ceaseless oscillation from one opposite to the other*. The entire process of the evolution of the individual is characterised by this oscillation between the opposites.

The evolution of the limited individual is completely determined by the *sanskaras* accumulated by him through ages, and though it is all part of imagination, the determinism is thorough

The thorough determinism of *sanskaras* and automatic. Every action and experience, howsoever ephemeral, leaves behind it an

impression in the mental body. This impression is an *objective* modification of the mental body; and as the mental body remains the same through several lives, the impressions accumulated by the individual are also capable of persisting through several lives. When the *sanskaras* thus accumulated begin to express themselves (instead of merely lying latent in the mental body), they are experienced as desires, *i.e.*, they are apprehended as being *subjective*. The subjective and the objective are the two aspects of the *sanskaras*; the former is a passive state of latency, and the latter is an active state of manifestation.

Through the active phase, the accumulated *sanskaras* determine each experience and action of the limited self. Just as several feet of film have to pass in a cinema to show a brief action on the screen, many *sanskaras* are often involved in determining a single action of the limited self. Through such expression and fulfillment in experience, the *sanskaras* get spent up. The weak *sanskaras* are spent up mentally; the stronger ones are spent up subtly in the form of desires and imaginative experience; and those *sanskaras* which are powerful are spent up physically by expressing themselves through bodily action.

Though this spending up of *sanskaras* is going on

continually, it does not end in freedom from *sanskaras*, because new *sanskaras* inevitably are being created *not only through fresh actions but even through the very process of spending up*. So the load of *sanskaras* goes on increasing, and the individual finds himself helpless before the problem of throwing off the burden.

The *sanskaras* deposited by specific actions and experiences render the mind susceptible to similar actions and experiences; but after a certain point is reached, this tendency is checked and counteracted by a natural *reaction* consisting in a complete changeover to its direct opposite, making room for the operation of opposite *sanskaras*.

Very often the two opposites form parts of one and the same chain of imagination. For example, a person might first experience that he is a famous writer, with wealth, fame, wife and all the agreeable things of life, and later in the same life, might experience that he has lost his wealth, fame, wife and all the agreeable things of life. Sometimes it seems that a chain of imagination does not contain both the opposites. For example, a person might experience throughout his life that he is a powerful king always victorious in battles. In this case he has to balance this experience by the experience of defeats or the like in the next life, taking one more life to complete his chain of imagination. *The purely psychological compulsion of the sanskaras is thus subject to the deeper teleological need of the soul.*

Suppose a man has killed someone in this life. This deposited in his mental body the *sanskaras* of killing. If consciousness were to be solely and simply determined by this initial tendency created by these

sanskaras, he would go on killing others again and again *ad infinitum*, each time gathering further momentum from subsequent acts of the same kind. There would be no escape from this recurring determinism, were it not for the fact that the logic of experience provides a necessary check to it. The person soon realises the incompleteness of the experience of one opposite and he unconsciously seeks to restore the lost balance by going over to the other opposite. Thus the person who has had the experience of killing will develop the psychological need and susceptibility for getting killed. In killing another person he has appreciated only one portion of the total situation in which he is a party, namely, the part of killing. The complementary half of the total situation, namely, the role of being killed, remains for him non-understood and foreign datum which, nevertheless, has introduced itself into his experience. There thus arises the *need to complete experience* by attracting to oneself the opposite of that through which one has personally gone, and consciousness has a tendency to fulfill this new and pressing need. A person who has killed will soon develop a tendency to get himself killed in order to cover the entire situation by personal experience.

The question which crops up here is "who would arise to kill him in the next life?" It may be the same person who was killed in the previous life or it may be some other person with similar *sanskaras*. As a result of action and inter-action between individuals there come into existence *sanskritic* links or ties; and when the individual takes a new physical body, it may be among those who have previous *sanskritic* ties or among those who have similar *sanskaras*. But the adjustment of life is such as to make possible the free play of evolving duality.

Like the shuttle of the weaver's loom, the human mind moves within two extremes, developing the warp and the woof of the cloth of life. *The development of the psychic life is best represented not as a straight line but as a zig-zag course.* Take the function of the two banks of a river. If there were no banks, the waters of the rivers would disperse, making it impossible for the river to reach its destination. In the same way, the life-force would dissipate itself in endless and innumerable ways were it not confined between the two poles of the opposites. These banks of the river of life are best looked upon not as two parallel lines, but as two converging lines which meet at the point of liberation. The amount of oscillation becomes less and less as the individual approaches the goal, and it completely subsides when he realises it. It is like the movement of the doll which has its centre of gravity at the base, with the result that it has a gradual tendency to become steady in the sitting posture. If shaken, it continues to swing from side to side for some time, but each movement covers a shorter span, and in the end the doll becomes stationary. In the case of cosmic evolution, such subsiding of alternation between the opposites means *Mahapralaya*, and in spiritual evolution of the individual it means *Liberation*.

The step from duality to non-duality is, however, merely a matter of difference in the state of consciousness. As the two are qualitatively different, the difference between them is infinite. The former is a not-God state and the latter is the God state. *This infinite difference constitutes the abyss between the sixth plane of consciousness and the*

Thorough the opposites to beyond the opposites

Planes of consciousness

seventh. The lower six planes of consciousness are also separated from each other by a kind of a valley or distance. But though the difference between them is great, it is not infinite, because *all are equally subject to the bi-polarity of limited experience*, consisting in the alternation between the opposites. The difference between the first plane and the second, the second and the third, and so on up to the sixth plane, is great but not infinite. It follows that, strictly speaking, none of the six planes of duality can be said to be really nearer to the seventh plane than any others. The difference between any of the six planes and the seventh plane is infinite, just as the difference between the sixth and the seventh planes is infinite. The progress through the six planes is a progress in imagination, but the realisation of the seventh plane is the *cessation* of imagination and, therefore, the awakening of the individual into Truth-consciousness.

The illusory progress through the six planes cannot, however, be altogether avoided. Imagination has to be completely exhausted before a person can realise the

Progress through the planes Truth. When a disciple has a Master, he has to traverse all the six planes. The Master

may take his disciple through the planes, *either with open eyes or under a veil*. If the disciple is taken under cover and is not conscious of the planes which he is crossing, desires persist until the seventh plane; but if he is taken with open eyes and is conscious of the planes which he is crossing, no desires are left on and after the fifth plane. If the Master comes for work, he often chooses to take his disciples under cover, for they are likely to be more actively useful for the Master's work if taken blind-folded, than taken with open eyes.

The crossing of the planes is characterised through-

out by the *unwinding* of *sanskaras*. This process of unwinding should be carefully distinguished from the spending up. In the process of spending up, the *sanskaras* become dynamic and release themselves into action or experience. This does not lead to final emancipation from *sanskaras*, as the never ceasing fresh accumulation of *sanskaras* more than replaces the *sanskaras* which are spent up, and the spending up itself is responsible for further *sanskaras*. In the process of unwinding, however, the *sanskaras* get weakened and annihilated by the flame of longing for the Infinite.

Longing for the Infinite may be the cause of much spiritual suffering. There is no comparison between the acuteness of ordinary suffering and the poignancy of spiritual suffering which a person has to go through while crossing the planes. The former is the effect of *sanskaras* and the latter is the effect of their unwinding. When physical suffering reaches its climax a person becomes unconscious and so gets relief from it, but there is no such automatic relief for spiritual suffering. Spiritual suffering, however, does not become boring because there is also intermingled with it a kind of pleasure.

The longing for the Infinite gets accentuated and acute until it arrives at its climax, and then gradually begins to cool down. While cooling down, consciousness does not altogether give up the longing for the Infinite, but continues to stick to its aim of realising the Infinite. This state of cooled but latent longing is preliminary to realisation of the Infinite. It has at this stage been the instrument of annihilating all other desires, and is itself ready to be quenched by the unfathomable stillness of the Infinite.

Before the longing for the Infinite is fulfilled through the realisation of the Infinite, consciousness

has to pass from the sixth to the seventh plane. It has

The peace of realisation

to pass from duality to non-duality. Instead of wandering in imagination, it has to arrive

at the ending of imagination. The Master understands the one Reality as being the only Reality and the "Nothing" as being merely its shadow. For him, time is swallowed up in eternity. As he has realised the timeless aspect of Reality he is beyond time, and *holds within his being both the beginning and the end of time*. He remains unmoved by the temporal process consisting of the action and interaction of the many. Ordinary man knows neither the beginning nor the end of creation. He is, therefore, overpowered by the march of events which loom large because of lack of proper perspective as he is caught up in time. He looks upon everything in terms of possible fulfillment or nonfulfillment of his *sanskaras*. He is, therefore, profoundly disturbed by the happenings of this world. The whole objective universe appears to him as an unwelcome limitation which has to be overcome or tolerated.

The Master, on the other hand, is free from duality and the *sanskaras* characteristic of duality. He is free from all limitation. The storm and the stress of the universe do not affect his being. All the bustle of the world with its constructive and destructive processes can, for him, have no special importance, for he has entered into the *sanctuary of Truth* which is *the abode of that eternal significance which is only partially and faintly reflected in the fleeting values of the phantasmagoria of creation*. He comprehends within his being all existence, and looks upon the entire play of manifestation as merely a game.

The Formation and Function of Sanskaras

THERE are two aspects of human experience—the subjective and objective. On the one hand there are mental processes which constitute essential ingredients of human experience, and on the other hand there are things and objects to which they refer. The mental processes are partly dependent upon the immediately given objective situation, and partly dependent upon the functioning of accumulated *sanskaras* or impressions of previous experience. The human mind thus finds itself between a sea of past *sanskaras* on the one side and the whole extensive objective world on the other.

Sanskaras originate in experience and become the basis of future experience thought, emotion and act is grounded in groups of impressions which, when considered objectively, are seen to be modifications of the mind-stuff of man. These impressions are deposits of previous experience and become the most important factors in determining the course of present and future experience. The mind is constantly creating and gathering

such impressions in the course of its experience. When occupied with the physical objects of this world such as the body, nature and other things, the mind is, so to say, externalised, and creates gross impressions. When it is busy with its own subjective mental processes (which are the expressions of already existing *sanskaras*), it creates *subtle* and *mental* impressions. The question whether *sanskaras* come first or experience comes first is like the question whether the hen or the egg comes first. Both are conditions of each other and develop side by side. *The problem of understanding the significance of human experience, therefore, turns round the problem of understanding the formation and function of sanskaras.*

The *sanskaras* are of two types—natural and non-natural—according to the manner in which they come into existence. The *sanskaras* which the soul gathers during the period of organic evolution are natural *sanskaras*.

Natural and non-natural sanskaras

These *sanskaras* come into

existence as the soul successively takes up and abandons the various sub-human forms, thus gradually passing from the apparently inanimate state of the stone or metal to the human state, where there is full development of consciousness. All the *sanskaras* which cluster round the soul *before* it attains the human form are the product of natural evolution and are referred to as natural *sanskaras*. They should be carefully distinguished from the *sanskaras* cultivated by the soul *after* the attainment of the human form. The *sanskaras* which get attached to the soul during the human stage are cultivated under the moral freedom of consciousness with its accompanying responsibility of choice between good and bad, virtue and vice. They are referred to as non-natural *sanskaras*. Though these post-human *sanskaras* are directly dependent upon the natural *sanskaras*,

they are created under fundamentally different conditions of life, and are, in their origin, comparatively more recent than the natural *sanskaras*. This difference in length of the formative periods and in the conditions of formation is responsible for the difference in the degree of firmness of attachment of the natural and non-natural *sanskaras* to the soul. The non-natural *sanskaras* are not as difficult to eradicate as the natural *sanskaras* which have an ancient heritage and are therefore more firmly rooted. The obliteration of the natural *sanskaras* is practically impossible unless the neophyte is the recipient of the grace and the intervention of a Sadguru.

As explained above, the non-natural *sanskaras* are dependent upon the natural *sanskaras*, and the natural *sanskaras* are a result of evolution. The next important

Manifested life arises due to the will-to-be-conscious in the Absolute

question is, "Why should manifested life in different stages of evolution emerge out of the Absolute Reality which is infinite?" *The need for mani-*

festated life arises out of the impetus in the Absolute to become conscious of itself. The progressive manifestation of life through evolution is ultimately brought about by the *will-to-be-conscious* which is inherent in the Infinite. In order to understand creation in terms of thought, it is necessary to posit this will-to-be-conscious in the Absolute in an involved state prior to the act of manifestation.

Although for the purposes of an intellectual explanation of creation the impetus in the Absolute

The lahar within the Absolute compared to a wave in the ocean

has to be regarded as a will-to-be-conscious, to describe it as a sort of inherent desire is to falsify its true nature.

It is better described as a *lahar* or an impulse which is so inexplicable, spontaneous and sudden that *to call it this or that is to have its reality undone*. As all intellectual categories necessarily turn out to be inadequate for grasping the mystery of creation, the nearest approach to understanding its nature is not through intellectual concept, but through analogy. Just as a wave going across the surface of a still ocean calls forth into being a wild stir of innumerable bubbles, the *lahar* creates myriads of individual souls out of the indivisible infinity of the Oversoul. But the all-abounding Absolute remains the substratum of all the individual souls. The individual souls are the creations of a sudden and spontaneous impulse and have, therefore, hardly any anticipation of their destined continuity of existence throughout the cyclic period until the final subsiding of the initial tremor. Within the undifferentiated being of the Absolute is born a mysterious point through which comes forth the variegated manyness of creation; and the vasty deep which, a fraction of a second before was icy-still, is astir with the life of innumerable frothy selves who secure their separateness in definite size and shape through self-limitation within the foamy surface of the ocean.

All this is merely an analogy. It would be a mistake to imagine that some real change takes place in the Absolute when the *lahar* of the involved will-to-be-

**Absolute being is
unaffected by the *bhas*
of manifestation**

conscious makes itself effective by bringing into existence the world of manifestation. There can be no act of involution or

evolution within the being of the Absolute, and nothing real can be born from the Absolute, as any real change is necessarily a negation of the Absolute. The change implied in the creation of the manifested world is not

an ontological change or a change in the being of the Absolute Reality. It is only an apparent change. In one sense the act of manifestation must be regarded as a sort of *expansion* of the illimitable being of the Absolute, as through that act the Infinite which is without consciousness seeks to attain Its own consciousness. As this expansion of Reality is effected through its self-limitisation into various forms of life, the act of manifestation might with equal aptness be called the process of timeless *contraction*. Whether the act of manifestation is looked upon as a sort of expansion of Reality or as its "timeless contraction," it is preceded by an initial urge or movement which might, in terms of thought, be regarded as *an inherent and involved desire to be conscious*. The manifoldness of creation and the separateness of the individual souls exist only in imagination. The very existence of creation or of the world of manifestation is grounded in *bhas* or illusion, so that, in spite of the manifestation of numberless individual souls, the Oversoul remains the same without suffering any real expansion or contraction, increment or decrement. Although the Oversoul undergoes no modification due to the *bhas* or illusion of individuation, there comes into existence its apparent differentiation into many individual souls.

The most original *bhas* or illusion into which the Oversoul was allured synchronises with the first impression. It therefore marks the beginning of the formation of *sanskaras*. The formation of *sanskaras* starts in the most finite centre which becomes the first focus for the manifestation of the individuality of the soul. In the gross sphere this first focus of manifestation is represented by the tri-dimensional and inert stone which has the most rudimentary

**Most original *bhas*
appears in stone
phase**

and partial consciousness. This vague and undeveloped state of consciousness is hardly sufficient to illumine its own shape and form, and is hopelessly inadequate to fulfill the purpose of creation, which was to enable the Oversoul to know itself. Whatever little capacity for illumination consciousness has in the stone phase is ultimately derived from the Oversoul and not from the body of the stone. But consciousness is unable to enlarge its scope independently of the body of the stone, because the Oversoul first gets identified with consciousness and then through it to the stone form. Since all further development of consciousness is arrested by the body of the stone and its langour, evolution of the higher forms or vehicles of manifestation becomes indispensable. The development of consciousness has to proceed side by side with the evolution of the body by which it is conditioned. Therefore the will-to-be-conscious, which is inherent in the vastness of the Oversoul, seeks by divine determination a *progressive evolution of the vehicles of expression*.

Thus the Oversoul forges for itself a new vehicle of expression in the metal form in which consciousness becomes slightly more intensified. Even at this stage it is

**Progressive evolution
of consciousness and
forms**

very rudimentary, and so it has to get transferred to still higher forms of vegetation and trees, in which there is an ap-

preciable advance in the development of consciousness through the maintenance of the vital processes of growth, decay and reproduction. Emergence of a still more developed form of consciousness becomes possible when the Oversoul seeks manifestation through the instinctive life of insects, birds and animals who are fully aware of their bodies and their respective surroundings, and who develop a sense of self-protection and aim at

establishing mastery over their environment. In the higher animals, intellect or reasoning also appears to a certain extent, but its working is strictly limited by the play of their instincts, like the instinct of self-protection and the instinct for the care and preservation of the little ones. So, even in animals, consciousness has not had its full development, with the result that it is unable to serve the initial purpose of the Oversoul to have self-illumination.

The Oversoul finally takes the human form in which consciousness attains its fullest development with complete awareness of the self and the environment.

Human consciousness

At this stage the capacity of reasoning has the widest range of activity and is unlimited in

its scope. But, as the Oversoul gets identified through its consciousness with the gross body, consciousness does not serve the purpose of illuminating the nature of the Oversoul. However, as consciousness has had its fullest development in the human form, there is in it a latent potentiality for Self-realisation, and the *will-to-be-conscious with which evolution started becomes fructified in the Sadguru or Man-God who is the fairest flower of humanity.*

The Oversoul cannot attain self-knowledge through the ordinary consciousness of humanity because it is enveloped in a multitude of *sanskaras* or impressions.

Winding of *sanskaras*

As consciousness passes from the apparently inanimate state

of the stone or the metal, then to the vegetative life of the trees, then onwards to the instinctive state of insects, birds and animals, and finally to the full consciousness of the human state, it is continually creating new *sanskaras* and becoming enveloped in them. These natural *sanskaras* are increased even after attaining the

human state, by the further creation of non-natural *sanskaras* through manifold experiences and multitudinous activities. Thus *the acquisition of sanskaras is unceasingly going on during the process of evolution as well as during the later period of human activities.* This acquisition of *sanskaras* may be likened to the winding up of a piece of string around a stick, the string representing the *sanskaras* and the stick representing the mind of the individual soul. The winding up starts from the beginning of creation and persists through all the evolutionary stages and the human form and the wound string represents all the positive *sanskaras*—natural as well as non-natural.

The fresh *sanskaras* which are constantly being created in human life are due to the multifarious objects and ideas with which consciousness finds itself confronted. These *sanskaras* bring about important transformations in the various states of consciousness. Impressions

**Examples of the
potency of impres-
sions**

created by beautiful objects have the potency of arousing in consciousness the innate capacity for appreciating and enjoying beauty. When one hears a good piece of music or sees a beautiful landscape, the impressions caught from these objects gives one a feeling of exaltation. In the same way, when one contacts the personality of a thinker, one may become interested in new avenues of thought and inspired with an enthusiasm utterly foreign to one's consciousness formerly. Not only impressions of objects or persons, but also impressions of ideas and superstitions have great efficacy in determining the conditions of consciousness.

The power of impressions of superstitions might be illustrated by means of a ghost story. Of the different realms of human thought there is perhaps none as

Impressions of superstitions

abounding in superstitions as that connected with ghosts who, according to popular belief, are supposed to harrass and torture their victims in curious ways. Once upon a time, during the Moghul rule in India, a highly educated man, who was very sceptical of the stories about ghosts, made up his mind to verify them from personal experience. He had been warned against visiting a certain graveyard on the night of *amavasya* (the darkest night of the month), for it was reported to be the habitation of a very dreadful ghost who unfailingly made his appearance whenever an iron nail was hammered into the ground within the limits of the graveyard. With a hammer in one hand and a nail in the other, he walked straight into the graveyard on the night of *amavasya* and chose a spot bare of grass in order to drive in a nail. The ground was dark, and his loosely hanging cloak was equally dark. When he sat on the ground and tried to hammer in the nail, an end of his cloak lay between the nail and the ground and was pinned down. He finished hammering and felt that he was successful with the experiment without encountering the ghost. But, as he tried to rise in order to depart from the spot, he felt a strong pull towards the ground and he became panic-stricken. Owing to the operation of previous impressions, he could not think of anything except the ghost who, he thought, had caught him at last. The shock of the thought was so great that the poor man died of heart failure. This story illustrates the tremendous power which sometimes resides in the impressions created by superstition.

The power and effect of impressions can hardly be overestimated. An impression is solidified might, and its inertness makes it immobile and durable. It can

**Freedom from
sanskaras is the
condition of har-
monious experience**

become so engraved upon the mind of man that despite his sincere desire and effort to eradicate it, it takes its own time and has a way of working

itself into action directly or indirectly. The mind contains many heterogenous *sanskaras* and, while seeking expression in consciousness, they often clash with each other. The clash of *sanskaras* is experienced in consciousness as a mental conflict. Experience is bound to be chaotic and enigmatic, full of oscillations, confusion and complex tangles until consciousness is freed from all *sanskaras*, good and bad. *Experience can become truly harmonious and integral only when consciousness is emancipated from the impressions.*

Sanskaras can be classified according to essential differences in the nature of the spheres to which they refer. Referring to these different spheres of existence,

Three types of *sanskaras* give rise to three different states of consciousness

they are found to be of three kinds: (1) Gross *sanskaras* which enable the soul to experience the gross world through the gross medium, and compel it to identify itself with

the gross body. (2) Subtle *sanskaras* which enable the soul to experience the subtle world through the subtle medium, and compel the soul to identify itself with the subtle body. (3) Mental *sanskaras* which enable the soul to experience the mental world through the mental medium, and compel it to identify itself with the mental body. The differences between the states of the individual souls are entirely due to the differences existing in the kinds of *sanskaras* with which their consciousness is loaded. Thus gross-conscious souls experience only the gross world; subtle-conscious souls experience only

the subtle world; and mental-conscious souls experience only the mental world. The qualitative diversity in the experience of these three types of souls is due to the difference in the nature of their *sanskaras*.

The Self-conscious souls are radically different from all the other souls, because they experience the Oversoul through the medium of the Self, whereas the other souls experience only their bodies and the corresponding

Self-conscious souls are free from *sanskaras*

worlds. This radical difference in the consciousness of Self-conscious souls and of other

souls is due to the fact that, whereas the consciousness of most souls is conditioned by some kinds of *sanskaras*, the consciousness of Self-conscious souls is completely free from all *sanskaras*. It is only when consciousness is unobscured and unconditioned by any *sanskaras* that the initial will-to-be-conscious arrives at its final and real fruition, and the infinity and the indivisible unity of the Absolute is consciously realised. The problem of deconditioning the mind through the removal of *sanskaras* is therefore extremely important.

The Removal of Sanskaras

PART I

THE CESSATION OF *SANSKARAS*: THEIR WEARING OUT AND UNWINDING

HUMAN beings do not have Self-illumination, because their consciousness is shrouded in *sanskaras* or the accumulated imprints of past experience. In them the will-to-be-conscious with which evolution started has succeeded in creating consciousness. But it does not arrive at the knowledge of the Oversoul, because the individual soul is impelled to use consciousness for experiencing *sanskaras* instead of utilising it for experiencing its own true nature as the Oversoul. The experiencing of *sanskaras* keeps it confined to the illusion of being a finite body trying to adjust itself in the world of things and persons.

The individual souls are like the drops in the ocean. Just as each drop in the ocean is fundamentally identical with the ocean, the soul which is individualised due to *bhas* or illusion is still the Oversoul and does not really become separate from the Oversoul. Yet the envelope of *sanskaras*, by which consciousness is covered,

Sanskaras prevent Self-illumination

*Problem of securing release from *sanskaras**

Adv. Vidit Chandra

prevents it from having self-illumination and keeps it within the domain of *maya* or duality. In order that the soul should consciously realise its identity with the Oversoul, it is necessary that consciousness should be retained and that *sanskaras* should be entirely removed. *The sanskaras which are contributory to the evolution of consciousness themselves become impediments to its efficacy in illuminating the nature of the Oversoul.* Henceforth the problem with which the will-to-be-conscious is confronted is not that of evolving consciousness but that of releasing it from *sanskaras*.

The release from *sanskaras* takes place in the following five ways:

(1) *The cessation of new sanskaras.*

Five ways of securing release from *sanskaras*

This consists in putting an end to the ever-renewing activity of creating fresh *sanskaras*. If the formation of *sanskaras* is compared to the winding of a string around a stick, this step amounts to the cessation of the further winding of the string.

(2) *The wearing out of old sanskaras.*

If *sanskaras* are withheld from expressing themselves in action and experience, they are gradually worn out. In the analogy of the string, this process is comparable to the wearing out of the string at the place where it is.

(3) *The unwinding of past sanskaras.*

This process consists in annulling past *sanskaras* by mentally reversing the process which leads to their formation. Continuing our analogy, it is like unwinding the string.

(4) *The dispersion and exhaustion of some sanskaras.*

If the psychic energy which is locked up in *sanskaras* is sublimated and diverted into other channels they are dispersed and heaved and tend to disappear

(5) *The wiping out of sanskaras.*

This consists in completely annihilating *sanskaras*. In the analogy of the string, this is comparable to cutting the string with a pair of scissors. The final wiping out of *sanskaras* can be effected only by the grace of a Perfect Master.

It should be carefully noted that many of the concrete methods of undoing *sanskaras* are found to be effective in *more than one way*, and the five ways mentioned above are not meant to classify these methods into sharply distinguished types. They represent rather the different principles characterising the psychic processes which take place while *sanskaras* are being removed. For the sake of convenience, this article will deal only with those methods which pre-eminently illustrate the first three principles (*viz.*, the cessation of fresh *sanskaras* and the wearing out as well as the unwinding of past *sanskaras*). The methods which predominantly illustrate the last two principles (*viz.*, the dispersion and sublimation of *sanskaras* and the wiping out of *sanskaras*) will be explained in the next section.

If the mind is to be freed from the bondage of ever-accumulating *sanskaras*, it is necessary that there should be an end to the creation of new *sanskaras*. Fresh multiplication of *sanskaras* can be stopped through renunciation.

Renunciation

Renunciation may be external or internal. External or physical renunciation consists in giving up everything to which the mind is attached, *viz.*, home, parents, wife, children, friends, wealth, comforts and gross enjoyments. Internal or mental renunciation consists in giving up all cravings, particularly the craving for sensual objects. Though external renunciation in itself is not necessarily accompanied by internal renunciation, it often paves a way for internal renunciation. Spiritual

Freedom consists in internal renunciation and not in external renunciation; but external renunciation is a great aid in achieving internal renunciation. The person who renounces his possessions disconnects himself from everything that he had or has. This means that the things which he renounces are no longer a source of fresh *sanskaras*. He thus takes an important step towards emancipating himself from his *sanskaras* by putting an end to the process of forming new *sanskaras*. This is not all that is achieved through external renunciation. With the renouncing of everything, he also renounces his past bindings. The old *sanskaras* connected with his possessions get detached from his mind and, since they are withheld from expressing themselves, they get worn out.

For most persons, external renunciation creates a favourable atmosphere for the wearing out of *sanskaras*. A man who possesses gold and power is exposed to a life of indulgence and extravagance. His circumstances are more favourable for temptations. Man is mostly what he becomes by being chopped, chiseled and shaped by the sculptor of environment. Whether or not he can surmount his surroundings depends upon his strength of character. If he is strong, he remains free in his thought and action, even in the midst of action and reaction with his environment. If he is weak, he succumbs to its influence. Even if he is strong, he is likely to be swept off his feet by a powerful wave of collective mode of life and thought. It is difficult to withstand the onslaught of a current of ideas and avoid falling prey to circumstances. If he resists the circumstances, he is likely to be carried away by some wild wave of collective passion and get caught up in modes of thought which he is unable to renounce. *Though it is difficult to resist and overcome the influence and surroundings, it is easier to escape from*

them. Many persons would live a chaste and straight-forward life if they were not surrounded by luxuries and temptations. The renunciation of all superfluous things helps the wearing out of *sanskaras* and is, therefore, contributory to the life of freedom.

The two important forms of external renunciation which have special spiritual value are (1) solitude and (2) fasting. Withdrawal of oneself from the storm

Solitude and fasting and stress of the multifarious worldly activities and occasional retirement into solitude are valuable for wearing out the *sanskaras* connected with the gregarious instinct. But this is not to be looked upon as a goal in itself.

Like solitude, fasting also has great spiritual value. Eating is satisfaction, fasting is denial. Fasting is physical when food is not taken in spite of the craving for the enjoyment of eating; it is mental when food is taken not for its delights and attachment, but merely for the survival of the body. External fasting consists in avoiding direct contact with food in order to achieve mental fasting.

Food is a direct necessity of life and its continued denial is bound to be disastrous to health. Therefore external fasting should be periodical and only for a short time. It has to be continued till there is complete victory over the craving for food. By bringing into action all the vital and psychic forces to withstand the craving for food, it is possible to free the mind from attachment to food. External fasting has no spiritual value when it is undertaken with the motive of securing the formation of the body or for the sake of self-demonstration. It should not be used as an instrument for self-assertion. In the same way, it should not be carried to the extreme—until the body is reduced to its limits. Self-mortification through prolonged fasting does not

necessarily promote freedom from the craving for food. On the contrary, it is likely to invite a subsequent reaction towards a life of extravagant indulgence in food. If, however, external fasting is undertaken in moderation and for spiritual purposes, it facilitates the achievement of internal fasting. When external and internal fasting are whole-hearted and faithful, they bring about the unwinding of the *sanskaras* connected with the craving for food.

The unwinding of many other *sanskaras* can be brought about through penance. This consists in augmenting and expressing the feeling of remorse which a man feels after realising that he has done some wrongful act. Repentance consists in mentally reviving the wrongs with severe self-condemnation. It is facilitated by availing oneself of the different circumstances and situations which stir up penance, or by remaining vulnerable during periods of emotional outbursts, or by deliberate efforts to recall the past incidents with a bleeding heart and acute disapproval. Such penance unwinds the *sanskaras* which are responsible for the action. Self-condemnation accompanied by deep feeling can negate the *sanskaras* of anger, greed and lust. Suppose a person has done irreparable wrong to someone through uncontrolled greed, anger or lust. Some time or other he is bound to have the reaction of self-killing remorse and experience the pricks of conscience. If at this time he vividly realises the evil for which he was responsible, *the intensity of emotional awareness by which it is accompanied consumes the tendencies for which he stands self-condemned.*

Self-condemnation sometimes expresses itself through different forms of self-mortification. Some aspirants even inflict wounds on their body when the

are in a mood of penitence, but such drastic expression of remorse must be discouraged as a general usage. Some Hindu aspirants try to cultivate humility by making it a rule to fall at the feet of everyone whom they meet. To a man of strong will and stable character, penance can bring the desired good effect through self-humiliation, which unwinds and eradicates the different *sanskaras* connected with good and bad actions. Others who might be feeble in their will-power also derive benefit from penance if they are under sympathetic and loving direction. When penance is carefully nourished and practised, it inevitably results in the *psychic revocation* of undesirable modes of thought and conduct and makes a man amenable to a life of purity and service.

It should, however, be carefully noted that there is always the danger in penance that the mind might dwell too long upon the wrongs done and thus develop the morbid habit of wailing and weeping over petty things. Such sentimental extravagance is often an indiscriminate waste of psychic energy and is in no way helpful for the wearing out or the unwinding of *sanskaras*. Penance should not be like everyday repentance which follows everyday weaknesses. It should not become a tedious and sterile habit of immoderate and gloomy pondering over one's own failings. *Sincere penance does not consist in perpetuating grief for the wrongs, but in resolving to avoid in the future those deeds which call forth remorse.* If it leads to lack of self-respect or self-confidence, it has not served its true purpose which is merely to render impossible the repetition of certain types of action.

The wearing out and the unwinding of *sanskaras* can also be effected by denying to desires their expression and fulfillment. People differ in their capacity

Withholding desires from fulfillment

and aptitude for rejecting desires. Those in whom desires arise with great impulsive velocity are unable to curb them at their source, but they can refrain from seeking their fulfillment through action. Even if a man has no control over the surging of desires, he can prevent them from being translated into action. Rejection of desires by controlling actions avoids the possibility of sowing seeds of future desires. On the other hand, if a man translates his desires into action, he may spend up and exhaust some impressions, but he is creating fresh impressions during the very process of fulfilling the desires, and is thus sowing seeds for future desires which, in their turn, are bound to demand their own satisfaction. The process of spending up or exhausting impressions through expression and fulfillment does not in itself contribute towards securing release from *sanskaras*.

When desires arise and their release into action is barred, there is plenty of opportunity for spontaneous cogitation about these desires. This cogitation results in the wearing out of the corresponding *sanskaras*. It should be noted, however, that such spontaneous cogitation does not bring about the desired result if it takes the form of mental indulgence in the desires. When there is a deliberate and wanton attempt to welcome and harbour the desires in the mind, such cogitation will not only have no spiritual value but may itself be responsible for creating subtle *sanskaras*. Mental cogitation should not be accompanied by any conscious sanction for the desires which arise in consciousness, and there should not be any effort to perpetuate the memory of these desires. *When desires are denied their expression and fulfillment in action and are allowed to pass through the intensity of the fire of a cogitative*

consciousness which does not sanction them, the seeds of these desires are consumed. The rejection of desires and the inhibition of physical response in time effect an automatic and natural negation of the past *sanskaras*.

Rejection of desires is a preparation for desirelessness or the state of non-wanting which alone can bring about true freedom. Wanting is necessarily bind-

Desirelessness ing, whether it is fulfilled or not. When it is fulfilled, it leads to further wanting and thus perpetuates the bondage of the spirit. When it is unfulfilled it leads to disappointment and suffering which, through their *sanskaras*, fetter the freedom of the spirit in their own way. There is no end to wanting because the external and internal stimuli of the mind are constantly alluring it into a state of wanting or disliking (which is another form of wanting) something. The external stimuli are the sensations of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The internal stimuli are those that arise in the mind-stuff of man from the memories of the present life and the totality of *sanskaras* gathered by consciousness during the evolutionary period and during human lives. When the mind is trained to remain unmoved and balanced in the presence of all external and internal stimuli, it arrives at the state of non-wanting, and by not wanting anything (*except the Absolute Reality which is beyond the opposites of stimuli*) it is possible to unwind the *sanskaras* of wanting.

Wanting is a state of disturbed equilibrium of mind and non-wanting is a state of stable poise. The poise of non-wanting can only be main-

Poise of non-wanting implies facing stimuli by "Neti, Neti" tained by an unceasing disentanglement from all stimuli, whether pleasant or painful, agreeable or disagreeable. In

order to remain unmoved by the joys and sorrows of this world, the mind must be completely detached from the external and internal stimuli. Though the mind is constantly fortifying itself through its own constructive suggestions, there is always the chance of these outposts of defence being washed away by some sudden and unexpected wave arising in the ocean of natural and mental environment. When this happens you may, for the time, feel completely lost, but the attitude of non-attachment can keep you safe. This attitude consists in the application of the principle of "*Neti, Neti*," "Not-this, Not-this." *It implies constant effort to maintain watchful detachment in relation to the alluring opposites of limited experience.* It is not possible to deny only the disagreeable stimuli and remain inwardly attached to the agreeable stimuli. If the mind is to remain unmoved by the onslaughts of the opposites, it cannot continue to be attached to the expressions of affection and be influenced by them. The equipoise consists in meeting both alternatives with complete detachment.

The "yes, yes" meaning of the positive sanskaras can only be annulled through the negative assertion of "no." This negative element is necessarily present in all aspects of asceticism, as expressed through

**Limit of negative
element in different
forms of asceticism**

renunciation, solitude, fasting, penance, withholding desires from fulfillment and non-wanting. The happy blending of all these methods and attitudes (which have been individually explained in this chapter) creates a healthy form of asceticism in which there is no toil or exertion. But to ensure all this, the negative element in them must come naturally without giving rise to any perversions or further limitations.

Trying to coerce the mind to a life of asceticism is

of no use. Any forcible adjustment of life on ascetic lines is likely to stunt the growth of some good qualities. When the healthy qualities of human nature are allowed to develop naturally and slowly, they unfold the knowledge of relative values and thereby pave a way for a spontaneous life of asceticism, but any attempt to force or hasten the mind towards an ascetic life is likely to invite reaction.

The process of being freed from some attachments is often accompanied by the process of forming some other new attachments. The grossest form of attachment is that which is directed towards the world of objects; but when the mind is being detached from the world of objects, it has a tendency to arrive at some finer attachments of a subjective kind. After the mind has succeeded in cultivating a certain degree of detachment, it might easily develop that subtle form of egoism which expresses itself through aloofness and a superior air. *Detachment should not be allowed to form any nucleus upon which the ego could fasten itself, and at the same time, it should not be an expression of one's inability to cope with the storm and stress of worldly life.* The things that condition pure and infinite being should be given up through an attitude of immense strength which is born of purity and enlightenment, and not from a sense of helplessness in the face of strife and struggle. Further, true detachment does not consist in clinging to the mere formula of "*Neti, Neti,*" which sometimes becomes an obsession of the mind without any deep-felt longing for enlightenment. Such interest in a mere formula of negation often exists side by side with an inward dwelling on the temptations. Detachment can be integral and whole-hearted only when it becomes a part and parcel of one's nature.

The negative assertion of "no, no" is the only way of unwinding the positive *sanskaras* gathered through

evolution and human lives. Although this process does destroy the positive *sanskaras*, it results in the formation of the *negative sanskaras* which, in their own way, condition the mind and create a new problem. The assertion of "no, no" has to be sufficiently powerful to effect the eradication of all the physical, subtle and mental *sanskaras*; but after it has served its purpose, it has to be ultimately abandoned. *The finality of spiritual experience does not consist of a bare negation.* To bring it under a negative formula is to limit it by means of an intellectual concept. The negative formula has to be used by the mind to decondition itself, but it must be renounced before the ultimate goal of life can be attained. Thought has to be made use of in order to overcome the limitations set up by its own movement, but when this is done, it has itself to be given up. This amounts to the process of *going beyond the mind*, and this becomes possible through non-identification with the mind or its desires. To look objectively upon the body as well as all thoughts and lower impulses, is to get established in blissful detachment and to negate all the *sanskaras*. This means freeing the soul from its self-imposed illusions like "I am the body," "I am the mind" or "I am desire" and gaining ground towards the enlightened state of "*I am God*," "*Anal Haqq*," or "*Aham Brahmasmi*."

The Removal of Sanskaras

PART II THE DISPERSION AND EXHAUSTION OF *SANSKARAS*

IN the last chapter I have explained those methods of removing *sanskaras* which depend chiefly on the principle of negating the positive *sanskaras* which veil the Truth from consciousness and prevent self-illumination, for which the whole creation came into being. All these

Negation of *sanskaras* attained through control

methods of negating the positive *sanskaras* are ultimately based upon the control of the body and mind. Control of the habitual tendencies of the mind is much more difficult than control of physical actions. The fleeting and evasive thoughts and desires of the mind can be curbed only with great patience and persistent practice. But the restraint of mental processes and reactions is necessary to check the formation of new *sanskaras* and to wear out or unwind the old *sanskaras* of which they are expressions. Though control might be difficult at the beginning, through sincere effort it gradually becomes natural and easy of achievement.

Control is deliberate and involves effort as long as the mind is trying to decondition itself through the re-

moval of *sanskaras*, but after the mind is released from the *sanskaras*, control becomes spontaneous because the mind is then functioning in freedom and understanding. Such control is born of strength of character and health of mind, and it invariably brings with it freedom from fear and immense peace and calmness. The mind, which appears feeble when it is wanton and uncontrolled in its functioning, becomes a source of great strength when it is controlled. *Control is indispensable for the conservation of psychic energy and the economical use of thought-force for creative purposes.*

However, if control is purely mechanical and aimless it defeats its own purpose, which is to make possible the free and unconditioned functioning of the

True control is creative self-adjustment in the light of perceived values

mind. Control which has true spiritual value does not consist in the mechanical repression of thoughts and desires, but is the natural restraint exercised by

perception of positive values discovered during the process of experience. True control is therefore not merely negative. When some positive values come within the focus of consciousness, their claims for being expressed in life generate psychic response and energy which ultimately remove all the mental tendencies obstructing a free and full expression of those values. *Thus the tendencies for lust, greed and anger are removed through an appreciative recognition of the value of a life of purity, generosity and kindness.*

The mind, becoming accustomed to certain habits of thought and response, does not find it easy to adjust itself to these new claims of its own perceptions, owing to the inertia caused by impressions of previous modes of thought and conduct. This process of *readjustment in the light of true values* takes the form of what we call control

ling the mind. This control is not a mechanical or forcible twisting of the mind. It is an effort of the mind to overcome its own inertia. *It is fundamentally creative and not negative in its purpose*, for it is an attempt of the mind to arrive at self-adjustment in order to release the expression of true values of life.

Creative control becomes possible because the source of light is within everyone, and though self-illumination is prevented by the veil of *sanskaras*, it is

Dispersion and exhaustion of old *sanskaras* through sublimation

not all darkness even within the boundaries of ordinary human consciousness. The ray of light consists of a sense for true values and guides man

onward with varying degrees of clarity according to the thickness of the veil of *sanskaras*. *The process of the negation of *sanskaras* is at the same time the process of understanding true values.* Spiritual progress is thus characterised by the dual aspect of renouncing false values of the *sanskaras* in favour of true values of understanding. The process of replacing lower values by higher values is the process of sublimation, which consists in diverting the psychic energy locked up in the old *sanskaras* towards creative and spiritual ends. *When the psychic energy locked up in the *sanskaras* is thus diverted, they get dispersed and exhausted.*

The method of sublimation is the most natural and effective method of breaking through the grooves of old *sanskaras*, and has the special advantage of having an

Process of sublimation sustained by unflagging interest

unfailing interest for the aspirant at all stages. The method of mere negation without any substitution is sometimes

likely to be boring and may seem to lead to vacuity. But the method of sublimation consists of replacing lower

values by higher ones, and is therefore full of absorbing interest at every stage, bringing an ever-increasing sense of fulfillment. Psychic energy can be sublimated into spiritual channels through (1) meditation, (2) selfless service of humanity and (3) devotion.

Meditation is deep and constant concentration upon an ideal object. In such concentration upon an ideal object, the soul is conscious only of the object of meditation,

Meditation: its nature and purpose tation, completely forgetting its mind as well as the body, so

that no new *sanskaras* are formed and old ones are dispersed and exhausted through the psychic activity of dwelling on the object of concentration. Finally, when the *sanskaras* completely disappear, *the soul as individualised is dissolved in the intensity of concentration and is merged in the ideal object.*

There are many forms of meditation according to the aptitude of different persons. The imaginative genius of persons who have to labour hard is often dried

Forms of meditation up due to overwork. For such persons the form of meditation

which is most suitable consists in disconnecting oneself from the thoughts, and then looking upon these thoughts and the body *objectively*. After the aspirant is successful in regarding his thoughts and his body with complete objectivity, he tries to *identify himself with the cosmic Being* through constructive suggestions such as "I am the Infinite," "I am in everything," "I am in all." Those who have vivid and lively imaginations can try intensive concentration on some *point*, but fixing the mind on some point should be avoided by those who have no liking for it. Ordinarily, the psychic energy of the mind is scattered through its diverse thoughts. Meditation on a point is very salutary for the mind to gather itself and settle down, but it is a mecha-

nical process and therefore lacks creative and blissful experiences. However, in the initial stages, this form of meditation might be used as a preparation for other more successful forms of meditation.

The more successful and deeper forms of meditation are preceded by deliberate and constructive thinking about God—the Beloved. Meditation on God is spiritually most fruitful. God can become the object of

Meditation on personal and impersonal aspects of God

meditation either in His *impersonal* aspect or in His *personal* aspect. Meditation on the impersonal aspect of God is suitable

only for those who have a special aptitude for it. It consists in focusing all thoughts on the abstract and unmanifest existence of God. On the other hand, meditation on the personal aspect of God consists in centring all thoughts upon the form and attributes of God. After intensive meditation the mind might want to settle down, not on the object of meditation, but on the steadiness of the expansive peace experienced during meditation. Such moments are the natural result of the fatigue of the faculty of imagination and they should be effortlessly encouraged.

Meditation should be spontaneous and not forced. In the moments of the surging up of the divine impulses, imagination should be let loose and allowed to soar high. The flight of imagination should be controlled only

Obstacles in meditation

by the set purpose of becoming

one with the Infinite. It should not be influenced by the currents of the diverse feelings of lust, greed or anger. Success in concentration comes only gradually and the novice is likely to be disheartened because he does not get satisfactory results in the beginning. Often the disappointment which he experiences is in itself a

serious obstruction to beginning the meditation of the day and to persist in it. Other obstacles like idleness and ill health also may be difficult to overcome, but they can be gotten over by having fixed and regular hours for meditation and steady practice. During early morning or at sunset the quiet condition of nature is particularly helpful for meditation, but it may also be undertaken at any other suitable time.

Solitude is one of the essential conditions for attaining success in meditation. In the world of thought there is a constant intermingling of thought-forms and thought-colours. Some mighty ideas tend to strengthen the mind by facilitating integration, whereas some frivolous thoughts are dissipating. The mind is either attracted or repelled by these diverse thoughts in the mental environment. It is advisable to avoid the influence of these variegated thoughts in order to *get established in one's own ideal of thought*. For this purpose solitude has immense possibilities. Solitude means economy of psychic energy and increased power of concentration. Having nothing extraneous to attract or repel the mind, you are drawn inwards and learn the art of opening yourself to the higher currents which have the potency of giving you strength, bliss and peaceful expansiveness.

While meditation on the personal and impersonal aspects of God requires withdrawal of consciousness into the sanctuary of one's own heart, *concentration on the universal aspect of God is best achieved through the selfless service of humanity*. When the soul is completely absorbed in the service of humanity, it is completely oblivious of its own body or mind or their functions, as in meditation.

Importance of solitude for meditation

Selfless service

tion, and therefore new *sanskaras* are not formed. Further, the old *sanskaras* which bind the mind are shattered and dispersed. Since the soul is now centring its attention and interest not upon its own good, but upon the good of others, *the nucleus of the ego is deprived of its nourishing energy*. Selfless service is therefore one of the best methods of diverting and sublimating the energy locked up in the binding *sanskaras*.

Selfless service is accomplished when there is not the slightest thought of reward or result, and when there is complete disregard of one's own comfort or convenience or the possibility of being misunderstood. When you are wholly occupied with

**Implications of
selfless service**

the welfare of others you can hardly think of yourself. You are not concerned with your comfort and convenience or your health and happiness. On the contrary you are willing to sacrifice everything for their well-being. Their comfort is your convenience, their health is your delight and their happiness is your joy. You find your life in losing it in theirs. You live in their hearts and your heart becomes their shelter. When there is true union of hearts, you completely identify yourself with the other person. Your act of help or word of comfort supplies to others whatever might be lacking in them, and through their thoughts of gratitude and good-will you actually receive more than you give.

Thus, through living for others, your own life finds its amplification and expansion. The person who leads a life of selfless service is therefore hardly conscious of

**Freedom and fulfillment
through service**

serving. He does not make those whom he serves feel that they are in any way under obligation to him. On the contrary, he himself feels obliged for being given a chance of making them happy.

Neither for show nor for name and fame does he serve them. Selfless service is completely achieved only when a man derives the same happiness in serving others as in being served himself. The ideal of selfless service frees him from the *sanskaras* of craving for power and possession, of self-pity and jealousy, of evil deeds actuated through selfishness.

Selfless service as well as meditation are both spontaneous when they are inspired by love. Love is therefore rightly regarded as being the most important avenue leading to the realisation of the Highest. In love the soul is completely absorbed in the Beloved and is therefore detached from the actions of the body or mind. This puts an end to the formation of new *sanskaras* and also results in the undoing of old *sanskaras* by giving to life an entirely new direction. *Nowhere does self-forgetfulness come so naturally and completely as in the intensity of love.* Hence it has been given the foremost place among the methods which secure release of consciousness from the bondage of *sanskaras*.

Love comprehends in itself the different advantages belonging to other paths leading to emancipation, and is in itself the most distinguished and effective path

Purifying efficacy of love It is at once characterised by self-sacrifice and happiness. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that

it is accompanied by an exclusive and whole-hearted offering to the Beloved without admitting the claims of any other object. Thus there is no room for the diversion of psychic energy, and concentration is complete. In love the physical, vital and mental energies of men are all gathered up and made available for the cause of the Beloved, with the result that this love becomes a dynamic power. The tension of true love is so great that

any foreign feeling which might intervene is at once thrown out. So, the expulsive and purifying efficacy of love is unparalleled.

There is nothing unnatural or artificial about love. It subsists from the very beginning of evolution. At the inorganic stage it is crudely expressed in the form of

**Love is present
 throughout creation**

cohesion or attraction. It is the natural affinity which keeps things together and draws

them to each other. The gravitational pull exercised by the heavenly bodies upon each other is an expression of this type of love. At the organic stage, love becomes *self-illuminated* and *self-appreciative* and plays an important part from the lowest forms like the amoeba to the most evolved form of human beings. When love is self-illuminated, its value is intensified by its conscious sacrifice.

The sacrifice of love is so complete and ungrudging that it has all to give and nothing to expect. *The more it gives the more it wants to give and the less it is aware of having*

**Love is expressed
 through conscious
 sacrifice**

given. The stream of true love is ever increasing and never failing. Its simple expression is its simple giving over. The complexities of the Beloved are

a concern of its best attention and care. Endlessly and remorselessly it seeks to please the Beloved in a thousand ways. It does not hesitate to welcome suffering in order to satisfy but one wish of the Beloved or to relieve the Beloved of the slightest pain of neglect or indifference. It would gladly pine and perish for the sake of the Beloved. Care-worn and tormented, it waits not to attend to the very body which houses and nourishes it. It brooks no compromise, and the Beloved is the concern of its lifetime. The tabernacle of love bursts under unmanageable restlessness, and gives birth to streams

of love and supreme sweetness, until *the lover breaks through his limitations and loses himself in the being of the Beloved.*

When love is deep and intense it is called *Bhakti* or devotion. In its initial stages devotion is expressed through symbol-worship, supplication before the deities and reverence and allegiance to the revealed scriptures, or the pursuit of the Highest through abstract thinking. In its more advanced stages devotion expresses itself as interest in human welfare and the service of humanity, love and reverence for saints and allegiance and obedience to the spiritual Master. These stages have their relative values and relative results. Love for a living Master is a unique stage of devotion, for it eventually gets transformed into *Para-bhakti* or divine love.

Para-bhakti is not merely intensified *Bhakti*. It begins where *Bhakti* ends. At the stage of *Para-bhakti*, devotion is not only single-minded but is accompanied by extreme restlessness of the heart and a ceaseless longing to unite with the Beloved. This is followed by lack of interest in one's own body and its care, isolation from one's own surroundings, and utter disregard for appearance or criticism, while the divine impulses of attraction to the Beloved become more frequent than ever. This highest phase of love is most fruitful because it has as its object a person who is love incarnate and who can, as the Supreme Beloved, respond to the lover most completely. The purity, sweetness and efficacy of the love which the lover receives from the Master contributes to the *insuperable spiritual value* of this highest phase of love.

The Removal of Sanskaras

PART III

THE WIPING OUT OF SANSKARAS

LOVE for the *Sadguru* or Perfect Master is particularly important because it invites contact with the *Sadguru*. Through such contact the aspirant receives from the *Sadguru* impressions which have the special potency of undoing other past impressions, thus completely transforming the tenor of his life. The recipient of the impressions may entirely give up old habits of life and ways of thought. Such contact changes and elevates the tone of the most depraved life. A person might have been leading a life of reckless dissipation without ever thinking of anything other than the fulfillment of mundane desires. He might have been caught up in the thirst for possession and power, with no ideal other than that of acquiring and hoarding money and making merry. But even such a person, who cannot by any stretch of imagination think of freedom from earthly fetters, may find that the *sanskaras* which he catches from his contact with the *Sadguru* are potent enough to drop forever a curtain on his old manner of thought and existence, and open for him entirely new vistas of a higher and

freer life. The impressions received from the *Sadguru* might be equally beneficial to an intellectual and cultured person whose vision is nevertheless circumscribed, whose imagination can at best appreciate the beauty of art and literature and whose altruism cannot go beyond the limits of his neighbourhood or the boundaries of his country. Such a person would, on receiving impressions from a *Sadguru*, be lifted to still higher modes of life.

The *Sadguru* can raise the aspirant from the ordinary intellectual level of consciousness to the level of consciousness where there is inspiration and intuition, and then onwards to the level of insight and illumination which culminates in his merging into the Infinite. This rising of the aspirant corresponds to his progress from the mundane sphere to the subtle sphere, from the subtle sphere to the mental sphere and finally from the mental sphere to the state of freedom. The last step implies *complete wiping out of all sanskaras—natural or non-natural—positive or negative*. To take the analogy of the string which is wound round a stick, this process of the wiping out of *sanskaras* consists in cutting the string with a pair of scissors. The erasing of all *sanskaras*, which is implied in the final release of consciousness from all illusion and bondage, can never be achieved *except through the grace of a Sadguru*.

But such active intervention by the *Sadguru* presupposes unrestrained relationship between the aspirant and the *Sadguru*, which can be established only when the aspirant succeeds in *complete self-surrender* to the *Sadguru*. Self-surrender implies obedience to all the orders of the Master. When all

Wiping out all sanskaras through intervention of the Sadguru

Need for complete self-surrender

your desires and actions are guided by him and are the result of your obeying his orders, he becomes directly responsible for them. Thus, when self-surrender is thorough, the responsibility for your release from *sanskaras* is devolved upon the Master, and under this new condition the Master annihilates all your *sanskaras* in no time.

Obedience to the Master as implied in full self-surrender is of two kinds: (1) intellectual and (2) literal. Of these two types of obedience, *intellectual obedience*

Intellectual obedience *comes first and is a preliminary to literal obedience* which is more fruitful. when you are intellectually convinced about the greatness and perfection of the Master, you have love and respect for him but are unable to follow his orders literally. Reason being the basis of your conviction, you find it difficult to divorce it from your understanding of the Master and his orders. As the two are inextricably intertwined with each other, your reasoned faith holds you within the limits of *intelligible* obedience. This phase of the pupil is left undisturbed by the Master, and all the pills of obedience offered by him are intellectualised in order to suit his taste and calibre.

Through intellectual obedience to the Master you can annihilate all your *sanskaras*, provided you are sincere in your logical interpretation of his orders and in their execution, but the

Literal obedience result comes much quicker if your obedience is literal. Literal obedience is the effect of the rock-like faith and deep love which the Master inspires in the pupil through his human appeal. The overflowing radiance of the Master's halo and the effulgence of his purity and compassion are mainly responsible for creating in the pupil an unswerving faith which prepares him to follow the Master's orders

implicitly, irrespective of their satisfying his critical spirit. Such literal obedience is not even bound by the requirement that the real significance of the orders should be within the intellectual comprehension of the pupil, and it is the best type of obedience for which you can aspire. *Through such implicit and unquestioning obedience, all the crooked knots of your desires and sanskaras are set straight.* It is also through such obedience that a deep link is created between the Master and the pupil, with the result that there is an *unhindered and perennial flow of spiritual wisdom and power* into the pupil. At this stage the pupil becomes the *spiritual son* of the Master, and in due time he is freed from all individualistic and *sanskritic* ties. Then he himself becomes a Master.

The *Sadguru* or Perfect Master has a position and power which is unique. There are many souls in the world who are more or less advanced on the spiritual

Role of the Sadguru

Path, but there are few who have crossed all six stages of the internal spheres of consciousness and become one with the infinite source of existence, knowledge and bliss. The *Sadguru* has not only experienced the different planes of consciousness, but he actually permeates the very being of all souls because of his having become one with the Infinite. He is the pivot of universal activity. In a sense, to him are due all your thoughts and actions, your joys and sorrows, your frets and fumes, your strength and weaknesses, your possessions and surrenderance and your love and longing. He not only pervades all existence, but is consciously conversant with the cosmic law of cause and effect and the complex working of the *sanskaras* of the individual souls. The causes of individual happiness or misery, vices or virtues are as much known to him as the causes of cosmic changes and upheavals. Every being is an open book for the

infinite searchlight of his omnipresent consciousness. Because of his union with the Infinite, he is endowed with unlimited power and in the twinkling of an eye can annihilate all the *sanskaras* of the soul and liberate it from all entanglements and bondage.

Good and Evil

THE human mind is not only going through experiences but is constantly evaluating them. Some experiences are regarded as agreeable and some disagreeable; some experiences are found to bring happiness and some suffering; some experiences are received as being pleasant and some unpleasant; some experiences are apprehended as restricting the life of man and some as leading it towards fullness and freedom; and some experiences are looked upon as being good and some bad. These are the opposites created by human imagination *when it is meeting life with a particular point of view.*

Man's conception of what is acceptable or unacceptable goes on evolving and changing according to the nature of desires which happen to be dominant

Acceptable and unacceptable at any particular moment. But, as long as there is any kind of desire in his mind, he is impelled to appraise his experience in relation to that desire and divide it into two parts, the one contributing towards its fulfillment and therefore acceptable, and the other tending to prevent its fulfillment and therefore unacceptable. *Instead of meeting life and all that it brings without expectation, entanglement or shirking, the*

mind creates a standard whereby it divides life into opposites, one of which is regarded as acceptable and the other as not acceptable.

Of the opposites created by the human mind the division between good and bad is spiritually most significant. It is based upon man's desire to be free from the limitation of all desires. Those experiences and actions which increase the fetters of desire

Even good is relative to desire

are bad, and those experiences and actions which tend to emancipate the mind from limiting desires are good. Since *good experiences and actions also exist in relation to desire*, they also bind in the same way as do bad experiences and actions. All binding can truly disappear only when all desires disappear; therefore true freedom comes when good and bad balance each other and become so merged into each other that they leave *no room for any choice by the limited self of desire.*

When human consciousness is fully developed we already find in it a preponderance of bad elements, since at the sub-human stages of evolution consciousness

Man starts with animal sanskaras

has been chiefly operating under limiting tendencies like lust, greed and anger. The

experiences and actions created and sustained by such ego-centred tendencies have left their imprints on the developing mind and the mind has stored these imprints in the same manner as film records the movement of actors. It is therefore easy to be bad and difficult to be good. Animal life, from which human consciousness emerges, is mostly determined by animal lust, animal greed and animal anger, though some animals do at times develop the good qualities of self-sacrifice, love and patience. If all the accumulated animal *sanskaras* had been bad and none good, the appearance of good

tendencies in human consciousness would have been impossible.

Though some animal *sanskaras* are good, most are bad; so, at the start, human consciousness finds itself subject to a propelling force which is mostly bad. Right from the beginning of human evolution, the problem of emancipation consists in cultivating and developing good *sanskaras* so that they may overlap and annul the accumulated *sanskaras*. The cultivation of good *sanskaras* is achieved by fostering experiences and actions which are opposite to those that predominate in animal life. The opposite of lust is love, the opposite of greed is generosity, and the opposite of anger is tolerance or patience. By trying to dwell in love, generosity and tolerance, man can erase the tendencies of lust, greed and anger.

The general process of freeing oneself from the limitation of *sanskaras* has, therefore, to be accompanied by the process of renouncing the bad for the good. But

Sinner and saint whether a person happens to be good or bad at any given time is dependent upon the inexorable operation of his *sanskaras*. From this point of view the sinner and the saint are both what they are according to the laws operative in the universe. They have both the same beginning and the same end. *The sinner need not have the stigma of eternal degradation and the saint need not have pride in his moral attainments.* No one, however saintly he may be, has attained the heights of moral virtues except after a life of moral failings, and no one is so bad as to be unable to improve and become good. Everyone, no matter how depraved, can gradually become better and better until he becomes the best example for all mankind. There is always hope for everyone; none is

utterly lost and none need despair. It remains true, however, that the way to divinity lies through the renunciation of evil in favour of the good.

The gradual unfoldment of good brings in its train love, generosity and peace. The good *sanskaras* deposited by the manifestations of these qualities overlap

**Limited self can live
in good *sanskaras* as
well as in bad**

and balance the opposite bad *sanskaras* of lust, greed and anger. When there is an exact balancing and overlapping of good

and bad *sanskaras* there is at once a termination of both types of *sanskaras* and the precipitation of consciousness from a state of bondage to a state of freedom. The credit and debit sides must be exactly equal to each other if the account is to be closed. But usually, either the debit side is greater or the credit side is greater and the account is kept running. It is important to note that the account is kept running not only by excess of the debit side but also by excess of the credit side. It can be closed only when the two sides balance each other. In the field of *sanskaras* such balance is a rare happening because at any particular time, either the good or bad *sanskaras* are predominant. Just as the account can be kept running by excess of either the debit or credit side, so the life of the limited self is prolonged and sustained through the excess of either bad or good *sanskaras*. The limited self can linger through good *sanskaras* as well as bad *sanskaras*. What is required for its final extinction is an exact balancing and overlapping of the bad and good *sanskaras*.

The problem of the exact balancing and overlapping of the good and bad *sanskaras* is not a *mathematical* problem of matching equal amounts. If it were purely a question of equal quantities it could be solved solely through the persistent accumulation of the good *sanka-*

Balancing and overlapping of good and bad *sanskaras*

ras. If there is a cessation or slowing down of the accumulation of bad *sanskaras*, and if, side by side, there is an unceasing accumulation of good *sanskaras* at a greater rate, sooner or later good *sanskaras* would be a quantitative match for the accumulated bad *sanskaras* and they would effect the necessary balancing. For *emancipation of consciousness*, the good and bad *sanskaras* have not only to balance each other in strength, but there has to be a point to point overlapping of the one opposite by the other. So, in a sense, the problem before each centre of consciousness is a specific problem relating to the qualitative variety of the nature of accumulated *sanskaras*.

If the accumulation of good *sanskaras* proceeds irrespective of the specific constitution of the existing *sanskaras*, there is a possibility of accumulating in some

Transference of ego to good

directions an excess of good *sanskaras*, side by side with the existence of bad *sanskaras* of a different type. For example, through self-mortification and severe types of asceticism some forms of attachment might be annulled but other forms of attachment may remain untouched by these practices and may continue to exist. The aspirant is not only likely to ignore the forms of attachment which have remained untouched but he may even carry on further his practices of self-mortification and asceticism by the propelling force of the *sanskaras* created by these very practices. In such a case an excess of good *sanskaras* is being created without termination of the limited ego. Even if the other forms of attachment remaining untouched are subsequently undone, the ego can get transferred to these new good *sanskaras* and continue to live through them.

Emancipation is not a matter of mere accumulation

virtue, it requires intelligent adjustment of sanskaras. Each centre of consciousness is unconsciously gravitating towards the

Need for adjustment of sanskaras

final emancipation of Truth-realisation, and there is a natural tendency in the mind to invite to

itself just that opposite which would meet the spiritual requirements of the situation. But it is not a mechanical and automatic process which can be left to itself independent of intelligent and right effort on the part of the aspirant. More often than not the aspirant finds it impossible to strike upon the really needful unless he has the good fortune to have the unflinching help of the Master, who alone has a direct and unerring insight into exactly what is necessary in a specific case.

It has been seen that good *sanskaras* can be the medium for the lingering life of the limited self. *When a person looks upon himself as being good and not bad, he is engaged in self-affirmation through*

Prison of the good

identification with this conviction, which is a continuation of separative existence in a new form.

In some cases this new house which the ego constructs for itself is more difficult to dismantle, because self-identification with the good is often more complete than self-identification with the bad. Identification with the bad is easier to deal with because, as soon as the bad is perceived as being bad, its grip on consciousness becomes less firm. The loosening of the grip of the good presents a more difficult problem, since *the good carries a semblance of self-justification through favourable contrast with the bad.* However, in course of time the aspirant gets tired of his new prison-house, and after this perception he surrenders his separative existence by *transcending the duality of good and bad.*

The ego changes the house of identification with evil for the house of identification with good because

the latter gives him a greater sense of expansion. Sooner or later the aspirant perceives the new abode to be no less of a limitation. Then he finds that the process of breaking through it is less difficult than the process of breaking through the former abode of identification with the evil. *The difficulty concerning the abode of evil is not so much of perceiving that it is a limitation but in actually dismantling it after arriving at such perception. The difficulty concerning the abode of the good is not so much in dismantling it as of perceiving that it is, in fact, a limitation.* This difference arises because the animal *sanskaras* are more firmly rooted owing to their ancient origin and long term of accumulation. It is important to note that the good binds as much as the evil, though the binding of the good can be more easily undone after it is perceived as being a limitation.

The ego lives either through bad *sanskaras* or through good *sanskaras*, or through a mixture of good and bad *sanskaras*. Therefore the emancipation of consciousness from all *sanskaras* can come either through the good *sanskaras* balancing and overlapping bad *sanskaras*; or, through some good *sanskaras* balancing and overlapping bad *sanskaras*, and some bad *sanskaras* balancing and overlapping good *sanskaras*. If a dish is filthy you may cleanse it by covering it with soap and washing it with water. This is like good *sanskaras* overlapping bad *sanskaras*. Now if the dish is full of grease, one way of getting rid of the grease is to cover it with dust and then wash it with water. Dust is the most greaseless thing in the world and, in a sense, the opposite of grease, so that when dust is applied to the dish tainted with grease it is easy to cleanse it. This is like bad *sanskaras* overlapping good *sanskaras*.

Good compared with evil

Analogies for overlapping of *sanskaras*

When there is exact balancing and overlapping of good and bad *sanskaras*, they both disappear, with the result that what remains is a clean slate of mind on which nothing is written, and which therefore reflects the Truth as it is without perversion. Nothing is ever written on the soul. The *sanskaras* are deposited on the mind and not on the soul. The soul always remains untarnished, but it is only when the mind is a clean mirror that it can reflect the Truth. When the impressions of good and bad both disappear the mind sees the soul. This is *Illumination*. The mind seeing the soul, however, is not the same as the soul knowing itself, for the soul is not the mind, but God, Who is beyond the mind. Therefore, *even after the mind has seen the soul, it has to be merged in the soul if the soul is to know itself in Truth. This is Realisation. In this state the mind itself with all its good and bad sanskaras has disappeared.* It is a state beyond mind, and therefore it is also beyond the distinction of good and bad. From the point of view of this state there is only one indivisible existence characterised by infinite love, peace, bliss and knowledge. *The perpetual strife between good and evil has disappeared because there is neither good nor evil, only one inclusive and undivided life of God.*

Violence and Non-Violence

MAN has a tendency to cling to catch-words and to allow his action to be determined by them almost mechanically without bringing his action into direct

Going behind words relation with the living perception which these words embody. Words have their own place and use in life but if action is to be intelligent, it is imperatively necessary that the meaning which these words are intended to convey should be carefully analysed and fixed. Among the words which need such exploration few are as important as "violence" and "non-violence." They have a direct bearing upon the ideologies which shape not only particular actions but also the entire tenor of life.

Spiritual life is a matter of perception and not of mechanical conformity to rules, even when these rules are meant to stand for the highest values. *It implies a*

Spiritual understanding goes beyond formulations

understanding which goes beyond all words or formulations. All words and formulations have a tendency to limit the Truth

Therefore those who seek to bring out the spirit underlying these formulations often have to launch upon a searching analysis of the formulated principles, and supplement this analysis by constantly retaining touch

with concrete examples taken from life. This is particularly true of those guiding principles formulated through the opposite concepts of violence and non-violence.

The words "violence" and "non-violence" are, in ordinary references, applicable to such diverse situations in practical life that no exposition of the issues

Starting with representative situations

involved can be complete, unless it takes note of these diverse situations and uses

them as a starting point. However, for the purpose of exposition, it is not necessary to exhaust numerically all the possible diversities which would be covered by these words. It is enough to consider some of the most *representative* situations. The representative situations mentioned below have been selected because of their capacity to shed abundant light on the fundamental values which centre round the concepts of violence and non-violence.

Situation No. 1. Suppose a man, who does not know how to swim, has fallen into a lake and is drowning and that there is another person nearby who is good

Case of drowning man

at swimming and wants to save him. The drowning man

has a tendency to grasp desperately at the person who comes to his help and the hold is often so restricting that it may not only make it impossible to save the drowning man, but may even cause the drowning of the one who came to help. The one who wishes to save the drowning man must therefore strike him unconscious by hitting him on the head before he can help him. Striking the drowning man on the head under such circumstances cannot be looked upon either as violence or non-violence.

Situation No. 2. Suppose a man is suffering from some disease which can only be cured through an

operation. Now in order to cure this suffering man as well as to protect others from catching this infection, a surgeon may have to remove the infected part. This cutting of the body by a knife also cannot be looked upon either as violence or non-violence.

Situation No. 3. Suppose an aggressive nation invades a weaker nation for selfish purposes, and another nation, inspired solely by the noble desire of

Case of aggressive nation

saving the weak nation, resists this aggressive invasion by armed force. Fighting in defence of the weak nation cannot be looked upon as either violence or non-violence, but can be called non-violent violence.

Situation No. 4. Suppose a mad dog has run amuck and is likely to bite the school-children, and the teacher in the school destroy the mad dog in order to protect

Case of mad dog

the children. This destruction of the mad dog does imply violence, but there is no hatred in it.

Situation No. 5. Suppose a physically strong man is insulted and spat upon by an arrogant man who is nevertheless weak, and suppose that the strong man

Case of non-violence of the strong

who has the power to crush the arrogant man not only desists from hurting the arrogant man, but calmly explains to him the gospel of love. This action implies non-violence, but it is the non-violence of the strong.

The *first three* situations mentioned above clearly bring out that the question whether a situation implies

Need for delicate considerations

violence or non-violence cannot be decided except by entering into many subtle and

delicate considerations: (1) regarding the diverse details of the situation, and (2) regarding the *motive* which prompts action. The *last two* situations show that even where violence or non-violence are implied, certain *other factors give meaning beyond the ordinary sense attached to these words "violence" and "non-violence."*

A detailed analysis of situation No. 1 shows that though it involves the use of force without prior consent of the victim, the motive was to save the drowning man.

Comments on case of drowning man

The application of force without the consent of the man on whom it is used, may be termed a case of violence. But the force is used *for the good of the drowning man* and not with any desire to inflict injury or harm on him, and in that sense it may be said that it is not a case of violence. In these *special* senses the situation can be said to involve violence and non-violence respectively, but in the *ordinary* sense of the words it cannot be looked upon as a case of either violence or non-violence.

Situation No. 2 is slightly different. Here also there is application of force (even to cutting of the body), which is for the good of the patient. But in most cases

Comments on case of surgical operation

the patient gives *his prior consent* to the operation. Further, the operation is intended not only to protect the patient himself from the further ravages of the disease, but is also intended to protect *others* from the spread of infection. The application of force here springs out of the motive of doing unmixed good, both to the patient as well as many others who might come into contact with him. Since no harm is intended, the application of force does not amount to violence in the *ordinary sense*. Nor can it be adequately looked upon as non-violence, since it is a clear case of cutting a part

of a living body.

Situation No. 3 is also very interesting and instructive. Here the fighting involves offering resistance to aggression, with no selfish motive or personal interest,

Comments on case of but solely with the purpose of
an aggressor nation defending the weaker nation.

This may inflict much injury and even destruction upon the aggressor nation, and the use of force is not only without its prior consent but *against its deliberate and conscious will*. Even in this situation we do not have a clear case of violence. In spite of the injury and harm involved, the application of force is not only for the good of the weaker nation, which is the victim, but in a very important sense it is also for the good of the aggressor nation itself, because through the resistance encountered to its aggression, *it is gradually cured of its spiritual weakness or disease of having a tendency to invade and exploit the weaker nations*. This violence is really not violent and so we call it non-violent violence.

The case of fighting with an aggressor nation is very similar to the case of surgery on an infected part.

Comparison of case of In the case of fighting with
aggressor nation the aggressor nation, the good
of the weaker nation appears

to be the primary result and the good of the aggressor nation (against which force is exercised) appears to be a secondary result. In the case of the operation, the good of the patient (on whom force is exerted) appears to be the primary result and the good of others appears to be a secondary result. But this is only a minor difference in benefit and when the two situations are carefully analysed and compared, it is found that both promote equally the good of the target of force as well as many others involved in the situation.

Defending the weak is an important form of selfless service and it is a part of *Karmayoga*. Use of force, when necessary for this purpose, is completely justified as an indispensable instrument for securing the desired objective. But any fighting undertaken to defend the weak

Defending weak a form of selfless service

must be without any selfish motives or hatred if it is to have unalloyed spiritual importance. It resembles the case of a man who defends a woman being attacked by another man for vile purposes, thus saving the woman's honour and life and correcting the attacking man by punishing him and making him repent.

Situation No. 4 is definitely a case of violence, but it is justified because there is no hatred in it and because it is intended to promote the greater good of the children who might be attacked by the mad dog. The case of the strong man, who gives a sermon instead of

Comments on cases of a mad dog and non-violence of the strong

seeking revenge (situation No. 5), implies non-violence, but it is not a case of inaction. It neither implies passivity nor weakness but strength and true creative action of an impersonal nature. It is non-violence of the strong.

The detailed analysis and comparison of the above diverse situations bring out the fact that questions concerning violence or non-violence, their justification or otherwise and the ascertainment of their true value or lack of value, cannot be decided by any

Spiritual understanding above rules, requires divine love

formal enunciation of a universal rule. They involve many delicate spiritual issues and implications. A right understanding of the status of violence and

non-violence in the scheme of spiritual values requires true perception of the meaning of the purpose of existence. Action, therefore, should not be governed by means of any slogans (however high-sounding) based upon incomplete and insufficient ideas of mere violence or mere non-violence. It should be a spontaneous outcome of divine love, which is above duality, and of spiritual understanding, which is above rules.

Violence and Non-Violence

Further Explained

Non-Violence

(I)

Non-Violence Pure and Simple

(based on Divine Love)

Here one sees all as his own Self and is beyond both friendship and enmity. Never under any circumstances does a single thought of violence enter his mind.

(II)

Non-Violence of the Brave

(based on unlimited pure love)

This applies to those who, although not one with all through actual realisation, consider no one as their enemy. They try to win over even the aggressor through Love and give up their lives by being attacked, not through fear, but through Love.

Violence

(III)

Non-Violent Violence

(based on unlimited love)

Violence done solely to defend the weak, where there is no question of self-defence or of self-motivation.

(IV)

Selfless Violence

(based on limited human love)

Violence done in self-defence when one is attacked treacherously, and with no other selfish motive. For example when one's mother's honour is on the point of being violated by a lustful desperado and when one defends one's mother. Also when the motherland's honour is at stake and it is being attacked by enemies, the nation's selfless effort at defending the motherland is selfless violence.

(V a)

Non-Violence of the Coward

(based on unlimited weakness of character and mind)

Those who do not resist aggression because of fear and for no other reason belong to this class.

(V b)

Selfish Violence

(based on hatred and lust)

When violence is done for selfish motives by an individual or nation for power and selfish gains, etc.

NON-VIOLENCE, pure and simple, means Love Infinite. It is the goal of life. When this state of pure and Infinite Love is reached, the aspirant is at one with God. To reach this goal there must be intense longing, and the aspirant who has this longing to realise the supreme state has to begin by practising what is termed "non-violence of the brave". This applies to those who, though not one with all through

actual realisation, consider no one as their enemy. They try to win over even the aggressor through love and give up their lives by being attacked, not through fear but through love.

As pointed out, "non-violence of the brave" is practicable for those individuals who have an intense longing to attain the supreme state. This longing is not to be found in the masses. If, therefore, it is intended to lead the masses to pure "non-violence", it is necessary first to prepare them for the "non-violence of the brave". To achieve this aim in a practical way it is necessary to make them follow, in the beginning, the principle of "non-violent violence"—that is, violence done solely to defend the weak without any selfish motive whatever. In times of actual war, when the masses are taken by surprise and when they are not even in the mood to listen to advice about having intense longing to attain the supreme goal of life, the only practical way to lead them finally towards the goal is to begin by inculcating in them the principle of "non-violent violence" and then gradually introducing the "non-violence of the brave." A premature attempt to introduce "non-violence of the brave" amongst the unprepared masses in actual wartime would not only fail but incur a serious danger of bringing in the fatal "non-violence of the coward," *i.e.*, the masses will not resist the aggression simply because of fear and for no other reason.

The masses may also be educated and led to the "non-violence of the brave" by making them follow the principles of "selfless violence," instead of those of "non-violent violence." Selfless violence is violence done in self-defence when attacked treacherously. No other selfish motive should be allowed to justify the violence. Thus, for example, when one's mother's

honour is on the point of being violated by a lustful desperado and when one defends her by resorting to violence, he is said to have followed the principles of "selfless violence." Similarly, when the honour of the motherland is at stake and it is being attacked by enemies, the nation's selfless effort in defending the motherland is "selfless violence." A tinge of selfishness being present (as the mother is one's own mother), the love expressed here is limited human love.

"Non-violence of the coward" is, as pointed out, fatal. So also is "selfish violence," i.e., violence for selfish motives by individuals or a nation to gain power or for other selfish ends.

It will therefore be seen that while non-violence, pure and simple, is the goal of life, this goal has to be attained by individual seekers of God by following "non-violence of the brave." The masses who have not the requisite intense longing for being one with Him, have to be led gradually towards this goal by the principles of "non-violent violence," or those of "selfless violence," according to the circumstances. In conclusion, it must be very clearly understood that "non-violent violence" and "selfless violence" are merely means of attaining the goal of life, namely, pure and simple "non-violence" or "Love Infinite." The means must not be confused or otherwise mixed up with the goal itself.

The motive and the result are always judged by general acceptance, as to whether they are good or bad. For example, "non-violence of the brave" and "non-violence of the coward" are both non-violence, but from the viewpoint of the motive force behind it, "non-violence of the brave" is born of *love* and "non-violence of the coward" is born of *fear*, which is the opposite of *love*. While as "non-violence" they are not opposites,

their motives are infinitely opposed to each other. The motive behind "non-violence of the brave" is losing one's life to gain Infinite Love, but the motive behind "non-violence of the coward" is to save one's own life, which gains infinite contempt. "non-violence of the coward" we put therefore under the headline of "non-love," while we put "Non-violence of the brave" under the heading of "love."

"Non-violent violence" is not placed under the heading of love but under the heading of *duty*—duty done selflessly to others according to *Karmayoga*, which eventually is linked up with unlimited love—but motivated by human love.

The difference between the two opposite forces cannot be obliterated, but the transformation of one force to another can happen when expressed rightly through the right channels. Food given wrongly becomes poison, while poison (like strychnine) given in small quantities as a tonic becomes food for the nerves. Although food in substance does not become poison and *vice versa*, the action and the result due to the use can become transformed.

Action and Inaction

ALL action except that which is intelligently designed to attain God-realisation, creates a binding for consciousness. It is not only an expression of accumulated ignorance, but a further

Action might add to accumulated ignorance

addition to that accumulated ignorance.

Religious forms and ceremonies as well as rituals and injunctions of different creeds and spiritual institutions have a tendency to encourage the spirit of love

Ceremonies a side-tracking on path

and worship. As such they are helpful to a limited extent in wearing out the ego-shell in

which human consciousness is caught. But if they are unintelligently and mechanically followed, the inner spirit of love and worship gets dried up. Then *they only result in hardening the ego-shell rather than wearing it out*.

Therefore, rituals and ceremonies cannot carry a man very far on the Path, and if they are unintelligently followed they create as much binding as any other unintelligent action. Deprived of all inner life and meaning, they might be said to be even more dangerous than other forms of unintelligent action, because man pursues them with the belief that they are helpful for God-realisation, whereas in fact they are far from being helpful. Owing to this element of self-delusion, lifeless

forms and ceremonies become a *side-tracking* on the Path. Often, through mere force of habit, man becomes so attached to these external forms that he cannot be disillusioned about their *imaginary value* except through intense suffering.

In many ways inaction is preferable to unintelligent action, for it has at least the merit of not creating further *sanskaras* and complication. Even good and

Life seeks to free itself from self-created entanglement

righteous action creates *sanskaras* and means one more addition to the complications created by past actions and ex-

periences. *All life is an effort to attain freedom from self-created entanglement. It is a desperate struggle to undo what has been done under ignorance, to throw away the accumulated burden of the past, to find rescue from the debris left by a series of temporary achievements and failures. Life seeks to unwind the limiting sanskaras of the past and to obtain release from the mazes of its own making, so that its further creations may spring directly from the heart of eternity and bear the stamp of unhampered freedom and intrinsic richness of being which knows no limitation.*

Action which helps in attaining God is truly intelligent and spiritually fruitful because it brings release from bondage. It is second only to that action which

Inaction often necessary stage

springs spontaneously from the state of God-realisation itself.

All other forms of action (howsoever good or bad and howsoever effective or ineffective from a worldly point of view) contribute towards bondage and are inferior to inaction. *Inaction is less helpful than intelligent action, but it is better than unintelligent action, for it amounts to the non-doing of that which would have created a binding. The movement from an unintelligent action to intelligent action (i.e., from binding karma to*

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unbinding *karma*) is often through inaction. This is characteristic of the stage where unintelligent action has stopped because of critical doubt, but intelligent action has not yet begun because no adequate momentum has arisen. This special type of inaction which plays its part in progress on the Path should in no way be confused with ordinary inaction which springs from inertia or fear of life.

Perfection

IN order to have a comprehensive idea of what is implied in perfection, it is necessary to classify it into two categories. There is spiritual perfection, which

Two types of perfection

consists in the *inner realisation of a transcendent state of consciousness beyond duality*. There is also

perfection *as expressed and seen in the domain of duality*. All related existence which is a part of the manifold world of manifestation admits of degrees; and when we are concerned with perfection as seen in this manifested world, we find that, like other things subject to duality, it also admits of degrees. Bad and good, weakness and strength, vice and virtue are all opposites within duality. In fact, all these aspects are expressions of the one Reality in different degrees.

Thus, evil is not utterly evil but goodness in its lowest degree; weakness is not mere incapacity but strength in its lowest degree; and vice is not pure vice

Only relative perfection in duality

but virtue at its lowest. In other words, evil is the minimum of good; weakness is the

minimum of strength; and vice is the minimum of virtue. All the aspects of duality have a minimum and a maximum and all intervening degrees. Perfection is no exception to this. The whole range of humanity is

included within the two extremes of perfection and imperfection; and *both perfection and imperfection are essentially matters of comparison, contrast and relative existence*. Perfection in the domain of duality is only *relative* perfection. It is only when we compare it with imperfection that it appears to us as perfection.

When perfection is concerned with duality it consists in the *excellence* of some attribute or capacity. In this context perfection in one respect does not necessarily include perfection in other respects. For example, a man who is perfect in science may not be perfect in singing, or a man who is perfect in singing may not be perfect in science. There is a sense in which excellence can be exhibited even in crimes. When a murder is committed in such a manner that not a single clue is left for tracing the murderer, it is called a perfect crime. Even in crimes or sins, then, there is a sort of perfection, but this type of perfection, which consists in the excellence of a quality or capacity, should be carefully distinguished from *spiritual* perfection which is not in the domain of duality. The different types of excellence which are characteristic of duality are all within the scope of the intellect, for such excellence can be easily envisaged by the extension (in imagination) of something good which is found in the limited experience of everyday life. The perfection which belongs to the spiritually realized souls is not in the domain of duality, and as such is entirely beyond the scope of the intellect. It has no parallel in the domain of duality. When a person becomes spiritually perfect he knows that nothing exists except God, and that what seems to exist in the domain of duality *and is capable of being grasped by the intellect* is only illusion. *For the spiritually perfect man, God is the*

Spiritual perfection distinguished from excellence

only reality. Science, art, music, weakness, strength, good and evil are all nothing to him but dreams. His perfection consists in the knowledge of one indivisible existence.

When a spiritually perfect soul wants to use all his knowledge and powers, it is always for the spiritual upliftment of other souls. His knowledge of others is **All forms of excellence latent in spiritual perfection** not based upon their expressions. Thought comes first, and its expression in words follows later. As he directly knows the minds of all, he is not dependent upon the expression of thought. For him words are unnecessary. If he wants to know something before it is manifested he can do so, but he does so only when it is necessary for spiritual reasons. In the same way, if he wants to have excellence in any other matter he can have it without any difficulty. All sorts of excellence are latent in spiritual perfection. Krishna was spiritually perfect. He was also perfect in everything. If he had wanted to he could have shown himself as a perfect drunkard, a perfect sinner, a perfect rogue or a perfect murderer, but that would have shocked the world. Though possessed of perfection in every respect, it was not necessary for him to exhibit it in fulfilling his mission. The spiritually perfect souls can exhibit supreme excellence in any mode of life which they may be required to adopt for the spiritual upliftment of other souls, but they do not do so merely to show themselves as perfect in that respect. Excellence of capacities is used by them only when there is a spiritual need for it, not merely to satisfy the curiosity of others. When they use such excellence of capacity they do so with utter detachment. Just as a person who wears gloves may touch the head of the universe without getting soiled, a spiritually perfect soul can be engaged

in universal activity without being bound by it.

Perfection is the full development of all the aspects of personality, so perfection must be all-sided. Perfection in one respect is no perfection. It is only a lopsided growth of a faculty or capacity, resulting in inflexibility or the incapacity to adjust oneself to the ever changing and multitudinous vicissitudes of life. Such a person cannot maintain a moving equilibrium of mind while keeping pace with the swift changes of life. If he is in an environment which, by its nature, gives scope for the faculty which he has developed, he is temporarily happy and enjoys a sense of being in harmony with the world. But if he finds himself in a hostile environment where his faculty is a misfit, he has a sense of failure and his poise is disturbed. Therefore perfection implies perfection in every respect.

If you try to grasp the nature of perfection by means of a set standard (implying an opposite), you are bound to limit it and thus fail to understand its real significance. Perfection includes the opposites and transcends them, therefore the perfect man is not bound by any rule or limited ideal. He is beyond good and bad, but his law for those who are good gives good reward, and for those who are bad it responds in their own coin. Krishna proved to Arjuna, who was his devotee, that his apparent bringing about of the physical and mental annihilation of the vicious Kauravas was for their spiritual salvation. Perfection might manifest itself through killing or saving according to the spiritual demands of the situation. The heart of the Perfect One is at once soft like butter and hard like steel. Perfection is not limited in its expression to any one of the opposites,

Perfection must be all-sided

Perfection includes the opposites and transcends them

and does not exclude the possibility of finding expression through the opposite. *It can express itself through either of the opposites according to the logic implied in the situation.* That is why it transcends the opposites and is capable of giving a rational response to all the possible situations in life. It ensures perfect adaptability without surrendering the standpoint of the Truth, and secures an unshakable peace and sense of harmony in the midst of diverse situations which must be baffling to those who have not had all-sided development.

Human activities are limited by the opposites and perfection is beyond them. It should not be imagined, however, that perfection has no human element about

Perfection is the supreme development of the human

it. Human beings are unhappy, and they laugh to make themselves and others happy, but even a Perfect

Man who is eternally happy is not without a sense of humour. In other words, perfection does not consist in being inhuman, but super-human; *it is the full development of that rationality which is implicit in humanity.*

Perfection does not belong to God as God, nor does it belong to man as man. We get perfection when man becomes God or when God becomes man. The

Perfection belongs to man becoming God or God becoming man

finite being who is conscious of his being finite is obviously short of perfection; but when he is conscious of

being one with the Infinite, he is perfect. That is what happens when man gives up the illusion of being finite and attains Godhood by realising his divinity. If by the Infinite we mean that which is opposed to the finite, or that which is away from the finite, and necessarily other than the finite, that Infinite is already limited by its being unable to assert itself in and

through the finite. In other words, perfection cannot belong to such an Infinite. The Infinite, therefore, has to discover its unlimited life in and through the finite without getting limited by this process. God's perfection is revealed only when He manifests Himself as man. The conscious descent of God into the limited form of man is known as *Avatar*. This again is a case of perfection. Thus *we have perfection when the finite transcends its limits and realises its infinity, or when the Infinite gives up its supposed aloofness and becomes man*. In both cases the finite and the Infinite do not stand outside each other. When there is a happy and a conscious blending of the finite and the Infinite we have perfection. Then we have the Infinite revealing itself through the finite without getting limited thereby, and we have the finite transcending its sense of limitation in the full knowledge of its really being the revelation of the Infinite.

The Life of the Spirit

IN true *Karma Yoga* or the life of perfect action, there is proper adjustment between the material and the spiritual aspects of life. In this type of life consciousness

Karmayogin faces the problems of life

is not fettered to the mundane and material things, but at the same time it is not allowed to

fly away from everyday existence. The mind is not allowed to be immersed in the material life of gnawing wants, nor is it allowed to be merged in spiritual bliss. It is used to face and tackle the problems of life from the point of view of spiritual understanding.

Proper adjustment between the material and the spiritual aspects of life is not secured by giving equal importance to them. It is not secured by taking something from the material and something from the spiritual and then striking a balance between the two. *The spirit*

Matter to be used as pliable instrument for expression of spirit

must and ever will have an inviolable primacy over matter, but the primacy is not expressed by avoiding or rejecting matter, rather by using it as an adequate vehicle for the expressions of the spirit. In intelligent adjustment matter has to play the role of a pliable instrument for the self-manifestation of the spirit, and must not in any way become obtrusive in its own rights. Just as the

musical instrument is valuable only if it gives vent to the song of the musician, and becomes a hindrance if it does not yield complete subservience, matter is valuable if it gives free and adequate expression to the creative flow of life and becomes an obstacle if it interferes with it.

Owing to the multifarious cravings of the mind, matter has a tendency to assume importance for itself. For the drunkard wine is everything; for the greedy

**Spirituality requires
subordination of mat-
ter, not rejection**

man the hoarding of money is all-important; and for the flirt the chase of sensations is the supreme end of life. These are

examples of how, through diverse cravings of the mind, matter becomes unduly obtrusive and perverts the expressions of the spirit. *The way to restore the dignity of the spirit is not to reject matter but to use it for the claims of the spirit.* This is possible only when the spirit is free from all cravings and is fully conscious of its own true status. When this is achieved, man may have material goods but is not caught up in them. When necessary he may use them as means for the life of the spirit but he is not allured by them nor does he become restless for them. He realises that in themselves they do not constitute the real significance of life. He dwells in the material and social environment without any hankering for them and, being unattached, is able to convert them into the field for spiritual life.

When once true adjustment between spirit and matter is secured there is no phase of life which cannot be utilised for the expression of divinity. No longer is

**Freedom of soul is
expressed through
dominion over matter**

there any need to run away from everyday life and its tangles. The freedom of the spirit, which is sought by

avoiding contact with the world and by going to the caves or mountains, is a negative freedom. When such retirement is temporary and is meant to digest worldly experiences and develop detachment it has its own advantages. It gives breathing time in the race of life. But when such retirement is grounded in fear of the world or lack of confidence in the spirit, it is far from helpful towards the attainment of real freedom. *Real freedom is essentially positive and must express itself through unhampered dominion of the spirit over matter.* This is the true life of the spirit.

The life of the spirit is the expression of Infinity and, as such, knows no artificial limits. True spirituality is not to be mistaken for an exclusive enthusiasm for

Spirituality covers the whole of life

some fad. It is not concerned with any "ism." When people seek spirituality apart from

life, as if it had nothing to do with the material world, their search is futile. All creeds and cults have a tendency to emphasise some fragmentary aspect of life, but *true spirituality is totalitarian in its outlook.* The essence of spirituality does not consist in a specialised or narrow interest in some imagined part of life, but in a certain enlightened attitude to all the various situations which obtain in life. It covers and includes the whole of life. All the material things of this world can be made subservient to the divine game, and when they are thus subordinated they become auxiliary to the self-affirmation of the spirit.

The value of material things depends upon the part they play in the life of the spirit. In themselves they are neither good nor bad.

Body is not necessarily a hindrance to spiritual life

They become good or bad according to whether they help or hinder the manifestation of

Divinity through matter. Take for example the place of the physical body in the life of the spirit. It is a mistake to set up an antithesis between "flesh" and "spirit." Such contrast almost inevitably ends in an unqualified condemnation of the body. The body obstructs spiritual fulfillment only if it is pampered as having claims in its own right. Its proper function is rightly understood as ancillary to spiritual purposes. The rider needs a horse if he is to fight a battle, though the horse can become an impediment if it refuses to be completely submissive to his will. In the same way *the spirit needs to be clothed in matter if it is to come into full possession of its own possibilities*, although the body can at times become a hindrance if it refuses to be compliant with the requirements of the spirit. If the body yields to the claims of the spirit as it should, it is instrumental in bringing down the kingdom of heaven on earth. It becomes a vehicle for the release of divine life, and when it subserves this purpose it might aptly be called the temple of God on earth.

Since the physical body and other material things can be used for the life of the spirit, true spirituality does not take any hostile attitude towards them, but

Science, art and politics can subserve spiritual ends

seeks expression in and through them. Thus the perfect man does not look down upon things of beauty or

works of art, attainments of science or achievements of politics. The things of beauty can be degraded by being made objects of craving or jealous and exclusive possessiveness; the works of art can often be used to augment and exploit egoism and other human frailties; the attainments of science can be used for mutual destruction, as in modern wars; and political enthusiasm, without spiritual insight, can perpetuate social and

international chaos; but all these can also be rightly handled and spiritualised. The things of beauty can become the source of purity, happiness and inspiration; the works of art can ennoble and raise the consciousness of people; the attainments of science can redeem humanity from unnecessary suffering and handicaps; and political action can be instrumental in establishing a real brotherhood of humanity. *The life of the spirit does not consist in turning away from worldly spheres of existence, but in reclaiming them for the divine purpose which is to bring love, peace, happiness, beauty and spiritual perfection within the reach of everyone.*

However, he who would live the life of the spirit must remain detached in the midst of worldly things without becoming cold or indifferent to them. Detach-

Detachment does not mean indifference

ment should not be misunderstood as lack of appreciation.

It is not only compatible with

true evaluation of things, but is its very condition. Craving creates delusion and prevents right perception. It nourishes obsessions and sustains the feeling of dependence upon external objects. Detachment promotes right understanding and facilitates perception of the true worth of things without making consciousness dependent upon external things. To see things as they are is to grasp their real significance as parts of the manifestation of the One Life, and to see through the veil of their apparent multiplicity is to be free from the insistent obsession for anything in its imagined isolation and exclusiveness. *The life of the spirit is to be found in comprehensiveness which is free from clinging, and appreciation which is free from entanglement.* It is a life of positive freedom in which the spirit infuses itself into matter and shines through it without submitting to any curtailment of its own claims.

The things and the happenings of this earthly existence are looked upon as foreign only so long as they are not engulfed in the advancing tide of comprehensive spirituality. When once they find their right place in the scheme of life, each of them is seen to participate in the symphony of creation. Then the expression of spirituality does not require a separate or exclusive field; it does not become degraded by being concerned with the ordinary physical, intellectual and emotional needs of people. The life of the spirit is a *unified and integral existence which does not admit of exclusive or unrelated compartments.*

The life of the spirit is an unceasing manifestation of divine love and spiritual understanding, and both these aspects of divinity are unrestricted in their universality and unchallengeable in their exclusiveness. Thus divine love does not require any special type of context for making itself felt; it need not await some rare moments for its expression, nor is it on the lookout for sombre situations which savour of special sanctity. It discovers its field of expression in every incident and situation which might be passed over by an unenlightened person as too insignificant to deserve attention. Ordinary human love is released only under suitable conditions. It is a response to certain types of situations and is relative to them. But *divine love which springs from the source within is independent of stimuli.* It is released, therefore, even in circumstances which would be looked upon as unfavourable by those who have tasted only of human love. If there is lack of happiness or beauty or goodness in those by whom the Master is surrounded, these very things become for him the opportunity to

True spirituality is comprehensive

Divine love is creatively dynamic in relation to environment

shower his divine love on them and to redeem them from the state of material or spiritual poverty. His everyday responses to his worldly environment become expressions of dynamic and creative divinity which spreads itself and spiritualises everything to which he puts his mind.

Spiritual understanding, which is the complementary aspect of the life of the spirit, must be distinguished from worldly wisdom, which is the quintessence of the conventions of the world. Spiritual wisdom does not consist in the unquestioning acceptance of the ways of the world.

Spiritual understanding not born of blind imitation

The ways of the world are almost always a collective effect of the actions of materially inclined people. Worldly people consider something to be right and make it right for persons of similar inclination. Therefore the blind following of convention does not necessarily secure wise action. The life of the spirit cannot be a life of uncritical imitation; it must have its basis in the true understanding of values.

Selfless Service

THE *Karmayogin* avoids the chaotic activity of selfish desires as well as the apparent inaction of utter non-wanting, but he leads a life of selfless service in which there is *not the slightest alloy of any personal motive* and which furthers the release of divinity in all phases of life.

Karmayogin avoids chaotic activity as well as inaction

It is very important that service, even when it is utterly selfless, be guided by spiritual understanding, for *selfless service, when unintelligently handled, often creates chaos and complications*. Many good persons are ceaselessly active for public cause through social institutions. But what

Unintelligent service creates chaos and complications

does that activity lead to? For one problem which it solves, it often creates ten other problems owing to the unforeseen and uncontrollable side-results of such activity. Worldly men try to counteract evil through opposition, but in doing so they often unconsciously become authors of other evils. Suppose a group of ants has climbed onto the body of an individual and one of them bites him. He might instinctively want to punish it by killing it, but if he were to strike it with his hands he might, in so doing, kill many other ants which were in no way involved in the biting. In trying to secure

justice against one ant he is thus inevitably drawn into an activity which means injustice to many other ants. The man who is drawn into the vortex of public life through a generous impulse, without having mastered the art of pure service, finds himself in a similar situation. He may be selfless, but his actions create chaos instead of harmony because he has not learned how to render real and effective service without creating complications. *If action is to be a pure blessing for the universe it must be born of consummate understanding of life.* Those who come into contact with me should develop true understanding of life and cultivate that type of service which creates no complications.

When service is rendered in a selfless spirit it always benefits the *Karmayogin*, although he himself does not do it for the sake of any reward or result. There is

Selfless service based upon understanding

no doubt that even when he renders selfless service unintelligently he derives some spir-

itual benefit thereby, but in doing so he cannot avoid causing much unnecessary suffering to others. However, when he renders selfless service with spiritual understanding it not only confers spiritual benefit upon himself, but also promotes the material and spiritual well-being of others involved. Selfless service must be based upon understanding if it is to be an unmixed boon for *all* concerned.

That which is looked upon as service by ordinary persons might, under special circumstances, be considered as disservice by the Master, for he has an unerring knowledge of the situation and a deeper grasp of its spiritual demands. Hence,

Apparent service sometimes really disservice

though it is normally an undeniable act of service to give food to those who are

needy, there may be some qualifying circumstances which, in a particular situation, require that the needy person should not be given food for his own good. The tendency to beg for food as charity creates undesirable *sanskaras*, and in feeding a person who comes to you with this tendency you may help him to increase the burden of such *sanskaras*. So, though you may appear to do him good by offering food, you may in reality be successful only in binding him further. Though it may not have been your motive to crush him under your obligations, you may in actuality be doing nothing else when you are charitable, not through understanding but through habit.

What applies to the above instance of giving food also applies to the dispensation of many other things—tangible and intangible; and *though, from the narrower point of view, a thing may definitely seem to be nothing but service for the recipient, it may, from the higher point of view, be a definite act of disservice to him.* Just as what is nourishing to a healthy man may be poison to a patient, what is generally good for people may be an evil for some particular person. Hence intelligent charity requires profound understanding of the spiritual needs of the situation.

But all this should only make people more careful and discriminating in their service. It need not discourage their spirit of selfless service. It is true that only

Even unintelligent service confers spiritual benefit

a Master can be unerring in gauging the spiritual demands of any situation, but it would be a pity if those who cannot

be so sure about their judgment withheld their spontaneous urge for selfless service lest they might unwittingly render a disservice. It has already been made clear that *even when a person renders selfless service, unintel-*

ligently, he always derives spiritual benefit through it.

In fact, from the spiritual point of view, the real danger in service lies more in the possibility of your rendering it from a false motive than in making a mis-

Service rendered with utter detachment

take about the spiritual demands of the situation. *If you render service in order to oblige a*

person and if you feel proud of doing it, you are not only doing spiritual harm to the recipient of your service but also to yourself. If, while serving, you take delight in it and develop pride in doing a good thing, you are getting attached to your act and thereby binding yourself. Just as a man may get bound by an iron or golden chain, so also a person can get spiritually bound by his attachment to evil or good deeds. Hence the way to remain free from *karma* is to remain completely detached in service. The consciousness, "I am obliging someone," is the first to occur during the process of serving; but it can be annulled by the contrary thought, "I am obliged by being given this opportunity of serving." This latter thought facilitates the attitude of detachment and secures freedom from the bondage of good actions. Service based upon comprehensive understanding is not only selfless and adjusted to the spiritual demands of the recipient, but is rendered with complete detachment. Such service takes the aspirant to the goal most rapidly.

The value of service depends upon the kind of good which is secured through it. Ministering to the bodily needs of others is service; cultivation of the in-

True service begins after realisation

tellest of others is service; feeding the hearts of people is service; satisfying the aesthetic

requirements of society is service. All these forms of service are not of the same value, even if they are all accompanied by a spirit of selflessness. The kind of

well-being which is sought through service will depend upon the vision of the person, and *he who has the clearest perception of final good will be in a position to render the most important and valuable type of service.* Those who have not found the supreme Truth are incapable of this highest type of service. Their service cannot have the same value for Creation as the service of a person who has arrived at finality in spiritual understanding. In a sense, true service begins after Realisation.

Nevertheless, the spirit of service which is invariably present in aspirants and good persons can be harnessed and creatively utilised for spiritual purposes

Serving Master facilitates enlightenment

if it is allied with the work of a Master. The Master serves the whole universe out of the finality of his infinite consciousness, and those who serve the Master and obey him also have their share in his universal work. Their service has the advantage of his wisdom and insight. Willing participation in the work of the Master not only raises the value of service but creates the best opportunities for spiritual enlightenment. *Service originating in the instructions of the Master is second in importance only to the service rendered by the Master himself.*

For most persons the idea of service is inextricably bound with securing certain definite results in the objective world. For them service consists in the removal

Service to be free from attachment to results

of human suffering or illiteracy or other difficulties and handicaps which thwart the flourishing of individual or social life.

This is the type of service rendered by aspirants, politicians, social reformers and other good persons. Though this type of service is of immense spiritual importance, it is in its very nature unending. In spite

of what any individual might attain in these fields, there always remains much that is to be achieved. Therefore, as long as the idea of service is thus tied to the idea of results, it is inevitably fraught with a sense of incompleteness. *There can be no realisation of Infinity through the pursuit of a never-ending series of consequences.* Those who aim at sure and definite results through a life of service have an eternal burden on their minds.

On the other hand, *service which comes after realisation of the Truth is a spontaneous expression of spiritual understanding of the true nature of the Self;* and though it

Service after realisation essentially different from service before realisation

also brings about important results in the objective world, it is in no way complicated by any longing for them. As the sun shines because it is its

nature to do so and not because it wants to achieve something through shining, the God-realised person also lives a life of self-offering because of the basic structure of the divine life which is at the heart of Reality, and not because he longs to achieve anything. His life is not a reaching out towards something with the hope of some kind of attainment. *He does not seek enrichment through attainments, but is already established in the fullness of the realisation of the Infinite.* The overflow of his being is a blessing to life in other forms and actually brings about their upliftment from the material as well as spiritual point of view. As his own happiness is grounded in the realisation of Divinity within him, it does not suffer any diminution due to the imperfection or suffering of life in other forms, and his consciousness is not tinged by the ache of something unrealised. There is a vast gulf between service before the realisation of the Truth and service after realising It. The life of the Master is a life of service; it is a per-

petual offering to other forms of his own Self. But this service, which is characteristic of the life of a God-realised person, is essentially different from service found in the lives of those who have not realised the Truth.

The Avenues to Understanding

THE different avenues which lead to spiritual understanding can be understood best through an initial distinction between spirit and matter. In order to

Spirit cannot be understood through mind

understand matter we have material means, and in order to understand the spirit we have spiritual means. Matter

is understood through the mind or the intellect working upon data given through the different senses, but *Spirit can be understood only through the spirit itself*. This highest form of understanding, in which the spirit enjoys self-knowledge without using any instrument or medium, is very rare and most difficult to attain. The best *approach* for the understanding of spirit is through the heart and not through the mind.

The mind is accustomed to work upon material things, and its driving power for this intellectual understanding of material objects is derived from lusts and

Conceptions and attitudes of mind towards matter inadequate for spirit

cravings. When mind is turned towards spiritual problems it tackles them along lines to which it is accustomed and, in so doing, uses concepts

which it has invented for the intellectual understanding of material things. However, this approach to under-

standing spiritual problems is doomed to fail, because *all concepts which the intellect evolves for knowledge of material things are inadequate for understanding the spirit*. It is like trying to see through the ears or hear through the eyes. If the mind tries to understand the spirit independently of the heart, it is bound to use analogues from the material world; and this inevitably leads to the spirit being looked upon as an *object* of the mind, which it is not.

As contrasted with the method of the mind, which has its foundation in sensations and which proceeds through inference and proofs to conclusions, there is the more direct method of the heart which intuitively grasps the values that are progressive-

**Conflict between
mind and heart**

ly realised in the life of man as he goes through the diverse experiences of the world, and as his attention is centred on arriving at spiritual understanding. In the life of most persons the mind and the heart are at loggerheads and the conflict between the two creates confusion. The heart, which in its own way feels the unity of life, wants to fulfill itself through a life of love, sacrifice and service. It is keen about giving instead of taking. It derives its driving power from the inmost psychic urge, expressing itself through the immediate intuitions of the inner life. It does not care for the proofs or intellectual corroborations which the mind seeks while dealing with material objects. In its objective handling of the material world mind is saturated with experiences of multiplicity and separateness, and therefore it feeds the ego-centric tendencies which divide man from man and make him selfish and possessive. But the heart, feeling in its inner experiences the glow of love, has glimpses of the unity of the spirit, and therefore seeks expression through self-giving tend-

encies which unite man with man and make him selfless and generous. Therefore there is necessarily a conflict between the "inner voice," and the deliverances of the intellect which are based upon the apparent and superficial aspects of life.

When the mind encroaches upon the province of the heart, it does so by requiring assurance or conviction as a precedent condition that must be fulfilled

Mind craves assurance or conviction

before there is a release of love.

But love is nothing if it is not spontaneous. It cannot be a

conclusion of reasoning. It is not a fruit of the spirit of bargain. *If you want to be certain about the object of love before giving your love, it is only a form of calculating selfishness.* Many persons, for example, want to be convinced of my divinity in order to be able to love me. That is to say, they want me to give them objective proofs of my spiritual status by performing miracles. Conviction of this type is often a hindrance rather than a help in releasing the highest form of love—which is utterly indifferent to what it might receive from the object of love.

When the mind seeks conviction or corroboration (through objective proofs and miracles as an aid to spiritual understanding), it is encroaching upon the

sphere which properly belongs to the heart. Conviction and corroboration become important when a person desires

Intellectual conviction hinders spontaneous love

guarantees for securing certain definite and tangible results in the objective world. Even if we suppose that a person is intellectually convinced of the existence of God by means of miracles or some such objective data, this will not necessarily release his heart. The allegiance which he might perhaps give to God as a result of such

cold revelation will be either through fear or through a sense of duty. *Love in which there is no sense or restraint cannot be born of a conviction which is based upon things accessible to the mind.* And where there is no love, there is no bliss or beauty of being. In fact, God's nature as the ocean of love cannot be grasped by the mind. God has to be known through love and not through intellectual search after miracles. That is the reason why I do not perform miracles for those who are closest and dearest to me. I would rather have no following than use miracles for convincing others of my divinity. It is true that, while loving me, people often do have spiritual experiences which were hitherto unknown to them, and these experiences help them in the further opening of their hearts. But they are not meant to feed the mental craving for intellectual conviction, and they should not be regarded as the goal.

When a person has his eye on the results of actions instead of being concerned solely with their intrinsic worth, he is trying to tackle spiritual problems through the mind alone, and in doing so, is interfering with the proper functioning of the heart.

**Glimpses of spirit
only through heart**

Mind wants to have all kinds of things and therefore seeks objective proofs, convictions and assurances. This demand of the mind is a fetter for the spontaneous outflow of love, which at once depends upon and furthers true spirituality. You cannot love through the intellect. What you may get through the mind is a *theory* of love, but not love itself. The knowledge which certain types of *yogis* have through their minds is merely intellectual and dry. It cannot give them the spiritual bliss which characterises the life of love. *Love and happiness are the only important things in life, and they are both absent in the dry and factual knowledge which is accessible to the intellect.*

Spirituality does not consist of intellectual knowledge of true values but in their realisation. It is this knowledge of inner realisation which is worthy of being called spiritual understanding, and this is far more dependent upon the heart than on the mind. Knowledge of the intellect alone is on the same footing as mere information and, being superficial, it moves on the surface of life. It gives the shadow and not the substance of reality. The hidden depths of the ocean of life can be gauged only by sounding the heart.

The intellect of most persons is harnessed by innumerable wants. From the spiritual point of view, such a life is the lowest type of human existence. The highest type of human existence is free from all wants and is characterised by sufficiency or contentment. Everyone is

**Freedom from want
possible in supra-
mental consciousness**

seeking happiness, but few have it, for lasting happiness dawns only when there is complete freedom from wants. This highest state of non-wanting may outwardly seem to imply inaction and to be easy of attainment. However, if anyone tries to sit quietly without inwardly wanting anything and with full consciousness (*i. e.*, without going to sleep), he will realise that such a state of non-wanting is very difficult to attain and that it can be sustained only through tremendous spiritual activity. In fact, complete non-wanting is unattainable as long as life is mind-ridden. It is possible only in supra-mental existence. One has to go beyond the mind to experience the spiritual bliss of desirelessness.

Between the two extremes of a life harassed by wants and a life which is completely free from wants, it is possible to arrive at a mode of practical life in which there is harmony between the mind and the heart. When there is such harmony the mind does not

Conditions for securing harmony between mind and heart

dictate the ends of life, but only helps to realise those ends which are given by the heart. It does not lay down any conditions to be fulfilled before any utterance of the heart is adopted for translation into practical life. In other words *it surrenders its role of judge*, which it is accustomed to play in its intellectual queries concerning the nature of the universe, and accepts unquestioningly the dictates of the heart.

The mind is the treasure-house of learning but the heart is the treasure-house of spiritual wisdom. The so-called conflict between religion and science arises only when

Heart must be free in determining ends of life

there is no appreciation of the relative importance of these two types of knowledge. It is futile to try to glean knowledge of true values by exercise of the mind alone. Mind cannot tell you which things are worth having, it can only tell you how to achieve the ends accepted from non-intellectual sources. In most persons the mind accepts ends from the promptings of wants, but this means denial of the life of the spirit. Only when the mind accepts its ends and values from the deepest promptings of the heart does it contribute to the life of the spirit. *Thus mind has to work in co-operation with the heart; factual knowledge has to be subordinated to intuitive perceptions; and heart has to be allowed full freedom in determining the ends of life without any interference from the mind.* The mind has a place in practical life, but its role begins after the heart has had its say.

Spiritual understanding is born of harmony between mind and heart. This harmony of mind and heart does not require the mixing up of their functions. *It does not imply cross-functioning, but co-operative func-*

Harmony of mind and heart secured by co-operative functioning

tioning. Their functions are neither identical nor co-ordinate. Mind and heart must of course be balanced but this balance cannot be secured by pitching the mind against the heart or by pitching the heart against the mind. It can be attained *not through mechanical tension, but through intelligent adjustment.* Mind and heart may be said to be balanced when they serve their proper purpose and when they perform their respective functions without erring this way or that. It is only when they are so balanced that there can be true harmony between them. Such harmony of mind and heart is the most important condition of the integral undivided life of spiritual understanding.

The Problem of Sex

SEX is decidedly one of the most important problems with which the human mind is confronted in the domain of duality. It is one of the "givens" in the

**Arising of problem
of sex**

make-up of human nature with which one has to deal. Like everything else in human life, sex comes to be considered through the opposites which are the necessary creations of the limited mind. Just as the mind tries to fit life into a scheme of alternatives such as joy or pain, good or bad, solitude or company, attraction or repulsion, so in relation to sex it tends to think of indulgence and repression as alternatives from which there is no escape. It seems as if man must accept the one alternative or the other. Yet he cannot whole-heartedly accept either, for when he tries repression he is dissatisfied with his lot and longingly thinks of indulgence. When he tries indulgence he becomes conscious of his bondage to the senses and seeks freedom by going back to mechanical repression. The mind remains dissatisfied with *both* alternatives and there thus arises one of the most vital and complicated problems of human life.

In order to solve the problem of sex, the mind must first understand that both alternatives are equally the creation of imagination working under the delud-

Opposites of indulgence and mechanical repression equally disappointing

ing influence of craving. Craving is implicitly present in the repression of sex as well as in its gratification. Both result in the vitiation of consciousness

through lust or the desire for sensations. The mind is therefore inevitably restless in either alternative. Just as when there are clouds in the sky, there is gloom and lack of sunshine, whether it rains or not; so when the human mind is shrouded by craving there is diminution of being and lack of true happiness, whether this craving is gratified or not. The mind when restless with desire creates an illusory idea of happiness in the gratification of desire, and then knowing that the soul remains dissatisfied even after gratification of desire, seeks freedom through repression. Thus *searching for happiness and freedom, the mind gets caught up in the opposites of indulgence and repression which it finds equally disappointing*. Since it does not try to go *beyond* these opposites, its movement is always from one opposite to the other and consequently from one disappointment to another.

Thus craving falsifies the operation of imagination and presents the mind with the option between the alternatives of indulgence and repression which prove

to be equally deceptive in their promise of happiness. However, in spite of alternate and

False promises of the opposites

repeated disappointment in indulgence as well as in repression, the mind usually does not renounce the root cause of unhappiness which is craving, because, while experiencing disappointment in repression, it is easily susceptible to the false promise of gratification, and while experiencing disappointment in gratification, it is easily susceptible to the false promise of purely mechanical repression.

This is like moving within a cage. The gateway to the spiritual Path of internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving remains closed for those who have

Renunciation of craving made possible through awakening

not the good fortune to be awakened by a Master. But true awakening is the entering into the path of wisdom which, in course of time, surely leads to the freedom and abiding happiness of life eternal. Internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving is as different from mechanical repression as it is from indulgence. *Mind turns to the mechanical repression of craving because of disappointment, but it turns to internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving because of disillusionment or awakening.*

The need for indulgence or mechanical repression arises only when the nature of craving is not clearly grasped. When the aspirant becomes fully awake to the

Indulgence and repression relative to craving

inevitable bondage and suffering entailed by craving, he begins voluntarily to disburden himself of craving through intelligent understanding. *The question of indulgence or repression arises only when there is craving. The need for both vanishes with the complete disappearance of craving.* When the mind is free from craving, the mind can no longer be moved by the false promises of indulgence or mechanical repression.

However, it should be borne in mind that *the life of freedom is nearer to the life of restraint than to the life of indulgence* (though in quality it is essentially different

Restraint nearer to freedom than indulgence

from both). Hence for the aspirant a life of strict celibacy is preferable to married life, if restraint comes to him easily without undue sense of self-repression. Such restraint

is difficult for most persons and sometimes impossible, and for them married life is decidedly more helpful than a life of celibacy. For ordinary persons, married life is undoubtedly advisable unless they have a special aptitude for celibacy.

Just as the life of celibacy requires and calls forth the development of many virtues, married life in turn also nourishes the growth of many spiritual qualities of

Possibilities of celibacy and marriage

utmost importance. *The value of celibacy lies in the habit of restraint and the sense of detachment*

and independence which it gives. But as long as the mind is not altogether free from craving there is no true freedom. In the same way, *the value of marriage lies in lessons of mutual adjustment and the sense of unity with the other.* True union or dissolution of duality is possible, however, only through Divine Love which can never dawn as long as there is the slightest shadow of lust or craving in the mind. Only by treading the path of inner and spontaneous renunciation of craving is it possible to attain true freedom and unity.

For the celibate as well as for the married person the path of inner life is the same. When the aspirant is drawn by the Truth he longs for nothing else, and as the Truth increasingly comes within his ken, he gradually disburdens himself of craving. Whether in celibacy or in

Path of perfection open in celibacy and in marriage

marriage, he is no longer swayed by the deceptive promises of indulgence or mechanical repression, and he practises internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving until he is freed from the deceptive opposites. The path of perfection is open to the aspirant whether in celibacy or in marriage, and whether he begins from celibacy or from marriage will depend upon his *samskaras* and

This is like moving within a cage. The gateway to the spiritual Path of internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving remains closed for those who have

Renunciation of craving made possible through awakening

not the good fortune to be awakened by a Master. But true awakening is the entering into the path of wisdom which, in course of time, surely leads to the freedom and abiding happiness of life eternal. Internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving is as different from mechanical repression as it is from indulgence. *Mind turns to the mechanical repression of craving because of disappointment, but it turns to internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving because of disillusionment or awakening.*

The need for indulgence or mechanical repression arises only when the nature of craving is not clearly grasped. When the aspirant becomes fully awake to the

Indulgence and repression relative to craving

inevitable bondage and suffering entailed by craving, he begins voluntarily to disburden himself of craving through intelligent understanding. *The question of indulgence or repression arises only when there is craving. The need for both vanishes with the complete disappearance of craving.* When the mind is free from craving, the mind can no longer be moved by the false promises of indulgence or mechanical repression.

However, it should be borne in mind that *the life of freedom is nearer to the life of restraint than to the life of indulgence* (though in quality it is essentially different

Restraint nearer to freedom than indulgence

from both). Hence for the aspirant a life of strict celibacy is preferable to married life, if restraint comes to him easily without undue sense of self-repression. Such restraint

is difficult for most persons and sometimes impossible, and for them married life is decidedly more helpful than a life of celibacy. For ordinary persons, married life is undoubtedly advisable unless they have a special aptitude for celibacy.

Just as the life of celibacy requires and calls forth the development of many virtues, married life in turn also nourishes the growth of many spiritual qualities of

Possibilities of celibacy and marriage

utmost importance. *The value of celibacy lies in the habit of restraint and the sense of detachment and independence which it gives.*

But as long as the mind is not altogether free from craving there is no true freedom. In the same way, *the value of marriage lies in lessons of mutual adjustment and the sense of unity with the other.* True union or dissolution of duality is possible, however, only through Divine Love which can never dawn as long as there is the slightest shadow of lust or craving in the mind. Only by treading the path of inner and spontaneous renunciation of craving is it possible to attain true freedom and unity.

For the celibate as well as for the married person the path of inner life is the same. When the aspirant is drawn by the Truth he longs for nothing else, and as

Path of perfection open in celibacy and in marriage

the Truth increasingly comes within his ken, he gradually *disburdens* himself of craving. Whether in celibacy or in

marriage, he is no longer swayed by the deceptive promises of indulgence or mechanical repression, and he practises internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving until he is freed from the deceptive opposites. The path of perfection is open to the aspirant whether in celibacy or in marriage, and *whether he begins from celibacy or from marriage will depend upon his sanskaras and*

karmic ties. He cheerfully accepts the conditions which his past life has determined for him and utilises them towards his spiritual advancement in the light of the ideal which he has come to perceive.

The aspirant must choose one of the two courses which are open to him. He must take to the life of celibacy or to the married life, and he must avoid at all

Necessity of clear choice

costs a cheap compromise between the two. *Promiscuity in sex gratification is bound to land*

the aspirant in a most pitiful and dangerous chaos of ungovernable lust. As such diffused and undirected lust veils the higher values, it perpetuates entanglement and creates in the spiritual path insuperable difficulties to the internal and spontaneous renunciation of craving. Sex in marriage is entirely different from sex outside marriage. In marriage the *sanskaras* of lust are much lighter and are capable of being removed more easily. When sex-companionship is accompanied by a sense of responsibility, love and spiritual idealism, conditions for the sublimation of sex are much more favourable than when it is cheap and promiscuous.

In promiscuity the temptation to explore the possibilities of mere sex contact is formidable. It is only by the maximum restriction of the scope of mere sex that

Dangers of promiscuity

the aspirant can arrive at any real understanding of the values attainable through the gradual transformation of sex into love. If the mind tries to understand sex through increasing the scope of sex, there is no end to the delusions to which it is a prey, for there is no end to the enlarging of its scope. In promiscuity the suggestions of lust are necessarily the first to present themselves to the mind, and the individual is doomed to react to people within the limitation

of this initial perversion and thus close the door to deeper experiences.

Truth cannot be grasped by skipping over the surface of life and multiplying superficial contacts. It requires the preparedness of mind which can centre

**Infinity attainable
through intelligent
handling of marriage** its capacities upon selected experiences and free itself from its limiting features. This process of discrimination between

the higher and the lower, and the transcendence of the lower in favour of the higher, is made possible through *whole-hearted concentration and a real and earnest interest in life*. Such whole-hearted concentration and real interest is necessarily precluded when the mind becomes a slave to the habit of running at a tangent and wandering between many possible objects of similar experience. In married life the range of experience to be had in the company of the partner is so wide that the suggestions of lust are not necessarily the first to present themselves to the mind. There is therefore a real opportunity for the aspirant *to recognise and annul the limiting factors in experience*. By the gradual elimination of lust and the progression through a series of increasingly richer experiences of love and sacrifice, he can finally arrive at Infinity.

The Sanctification of Married Life

MOST persons enter into married life as a matter of course, but marriage will become a help or a hindrance according to the manner in which it is handled. There is no doubt that some of the immense spiritual possibilities are accessible through a married life, but all this depends upon having the right attitude. From the spiritual point of view, married life will be a success only if it is thoroughly determined by the vision of Truth. It cannot offer much if it is based upon nothing more than the limited motives of mere sex, or if it is inspired by considerations which usually prevail in business partnership. It has to be undertaken as *a real spiritual enterprise which is intended to discover what life can be at its best.* When the two partners launch together upon the spiritual adventure of exploring the higher possibilities of spirit, they cannot at the outset limit their experiment by any nice calculations concerning the nature and amount of *individual gain.*

Married life almost always makes many demands upon both partners for mutual adjustment and understanding, and creates many problems which were not originally expected. Though this might in a sense be true of life in general it is particularly true of mar-

Married life essentially different from promiscuous sex-partnership

ried life. In married life two souls get linked in many ways, with the result that they are called upon to *tackle the whole complex problem of personality rather than any simple problem created by some isolated desire*. This is precisely why married life is utterly different from promiscuous sex relations. Promiscuous sex attempts to separate the problem of sex from *other* needs of the developing personality and seeks to solve it in isolation from them. Although this kind of solution might seem to be easy, it turns out to be very superficial and has the further disadvantage of *side-tracking* the aspirant from attempting the real solution.

The relative values of the various sides of the limited personality can best be appreciated when they become intertwined and appear in varied settings and perspectives. It is difficult to discriminate between them if they appear fitfully in a disconnected series. In married life there is ample room for

Tension between the varied purposes of married life calls forth sublimation

varied experience, with the result that the different tendencies latent in the mind begin to organise around the crystallised scheme of married life. This organisation of varied purposes *not only provides an unlimited field for discrimination between the higher and lower values but also creates between them a necessary tension which requires and calls forth effective and intelligent sublimation*.

In one sense married life may be looked upon as the intensification of most human problems. As such it becomes *the rallying ground for the forces of bondage as well as for the forces of freedom*, the factors of ignorance as well as

Conditions of marriage precipitate changes in inner life

the factors of light. As the married life of ordinary persons is determined by mixed motives and considerations, it inevitably invites an uncompromising opposition between the higher and the lower self. Such opposition is necessary for the wearing out of the lower self and the dawning of the true Divine Self. Married life develops so many points of contact between two souls that severance of all connection would mean the unsettlement and derangement of practically the whole tenor of life. Since this difficulty of breaking away from one another invites and precipitates inner readjustment, marriage is really a disguised opportunity for the souls to establish a real and lasting understanding which can cope with the most complex and delicate situations.

The spiritual value of married life is directly related to the nature of the preponderating factors which determine its daily course. If it is based upon

**Married life must be
in tune with Divine
Plan**

shallow considerations, it can deteriorate into a partnership in selfishness aimed against the rest of the world. If it is inspired by lofty idealism, it can rise to a fellowship which not only requires and calls forth increasingly greater sacrifices for each other, but actually *become a medium through which the two souls can offer their united love and service to the whole family of humanity*. When married life is thus brought into direct line with the Divine Plan for the evolution of the individual, it becomes a pure blessing for the children who are the fruit of the marriage, for they have the advantage of absorbing a spiritual atmosphere from the very beginning of their earthly career.

Though the children are thus the beneficiaries of the married life of the parents, *the married life of the*

parents is in its turn enriched by the presence of the children.

Married life sanctified and enriched by children

Children give to parents an opportunity for expressing and developing a real and spontaneous love in which sacrifice

becomes easy and delightful, and the part played by children in the life of parents is of tremendous importance for the spiritual advancement of parents themselves. It therefore follows that when children make their appearance in married life they ought to be wholeheartedly welcomed by the parents.

In view of the claims which children have on married lives the present birth control movement deserves careful attention and critical examination. The

Birth control movement's wrong means

question must not be considered from the point of view of any one special or limited

interest but from the point of view of the *ultimate* well-being of the individual and society. The right opinion in this respect, as in all respects, must above everything be based upon spiritual considerations. The attitude which most persons have towards birth control is oscillating and confused because it contains a queer admixture of good and bad elements. *While birth control is right in its aim of securing the regulation of population, it is disastrously unfortunate in the choice of its means.* There can be no doubt that the regulation of child-bearing is often desirable for personal and social reasons. Uncontrolled breeding intensifies the struggle for existence and may bring about a social order where ruthless competition becomes inevitable. Apart from creating a responsibility for parents which they may be unable to adequately discharge, it becomes an indirect and contributory cause of crime, war and poverty. Though humane and rational considerations demand and justify

all serious attempts to regulate the birth of children, the use of physical means for securing this purpose remains fundamentally indefensible and unjustifiable.

The purely physical means which are generally advocated by the supporters of birth control are most objectionable from the spiritual point of view. Although

Physical means removes incentive to mental control

the physical means of birth control are advocated on humanitarian grounds, they are almost always used by the generality of people to serve their own selfish ends and to avoid the responsibility of bearing and bringing up children. Since the physical consequences of yielding to lust can be so successfully avoided through the use of these means, those who have not begun to awaken to the higher values have no incentive to moderation in the gratification of passion. They thus become victims of excessive indulgence and bring about their own physical, moral and spiritual ruin by neglecting mental control and becoming slaves to animal passion.

The easy use of the physical means obscures the spiritual side of the question and is far from being contributory to the awakening of man to his real

Mental control indispensable for rising from passion to peace

dignity and freedom as a spiritual being. Thoughtless and uncontrolled indulgence must inevitably lead to reaction and spiritual bondage. For spiritual aspirants in particular, but also for all human beings (because they are all potentially spiritual aspirants), it is extremely inadvisable to rely upon physical means for the regulation of child-bearing. *For such regulation the individual must rely upon nothing but mental control.* Mental control secures the humanitarian purposes which inspire birth control and keeps clear of the spiritual disasters entailed

by the use of physical means. Mental control is not only useful for regulating the number of children but is also indispensable for restoring to man his divine dignity and spiritual well-being. *Only through the wise exercise of mental control is it possible for man to rise from passion to peace, from bondage to freedom and from animality to purity.* In the minds of thoughtful persons the much ignored spiritual side of this question must assume the importance which it deserves.

Since woman has to undertake the troubles and the responsibility of bearing and rearing children she may seem to be affected more seriously by any possible failure in mental control than man. In fact it does not mean any real unfairness to woman.

**Joint responsibility
of parenthood**

While it is true that woman has to undertake the troubles and the responsibility of bearing and rearing children, she also has the compensating joy of feeding and fondling them. Thus motherhood is much greater than the joy of fatherhood. Further, the man must also face and shoulder the economic and educational responsibility towards the children. In a properly adjusted marriage there need not be any injustice in the distribution of parental responsibility to be shared between man and woman. If both are truly conscious of their mutual responsibility, *inconsiderateness will give way to active and co-operative endeavour to attain full mental control.* In the event there is any failure in mental control they will cheerfully and willingly discharge the joint responsibility of parenthood.

If a person is not prepared to undertake the responsibility of children there is only one course left to him. He must remain celibate and practise strict mental control, for though such

**Children must be
welcome**

mental control is extremely difficult to attain, it is not impossible. From the purely spiritual point of view strict celibacy is best, but since it is so difficult, few can practise it. For those who cannot practise it, the next best course is to marry rather than fall a prey to promiscuity. Within married life one can learn to control animal passion. It is bound to be a gradual process, and *in cases of failure in practising control, the couple must allow nature to take its own course rather than interfere with it through artificial means.* They must cheerfully welcome the consequences and be prepared to shoulder the responsibility of bringing up the children.

From the spiritual point of view, birth control must essentially be effected through mental control and nothing else. Physical means are under no circum-

Mental power undermined by reliance on physical means

stances advisable *even when a person seeks to use them merely as a provisional and secondary aid, without intending to ignore the*

ideal of developing mental control. While using physical means he can never arrive at real mental control, though he might want it in real earnest. On the contrary he becomes addicted to the use of physical means and even begins to justify them. To explain still more clearly, what happens in the use of physical means is that while the individual thinks that he is using them merely as a preliminary step before mental control is fully developed, he actually gets addicted to their use and becomes a slave to the habit. Though he may remain for some time under the delusion that he is trying to develop mental control (side by side with the use of physical means), he is actually losing it gradually. In short, *mental power is necessarily undermined by reliance on physical means.* Thus the use of physical means is detrimental to the development of self-control and is

positively disastrous for spiritual advancement. It is therefore entirely inadvisable even for the best of motives.

In the beginning of married life the partners are drawn to each other by lust as well as love, but with conscious and deliberate co-operation they can gradually lessen the element of lust and increase the element of love. Through this process of sublimation lust ultimately gives place to deep love. By the mutual sharing of joys and sorrows the partners march on from one spiritual triumph to another, from deep love to ever deeper love, till *the possessive and jealous love of the initial period is entirely replaced by a self-giving and expansive love*. In fact, through the intelligent handling of marriage a person may traverse so much of the spiritual path that it needs only a touch by the Master to raise him into the sanctuary of eternal life.

Spiritual advancement through married life

Love

LIFE and love are inseparable from each other. Where there is life, there is love. Even the most rudimentary consciousness is always trying to burst out of

Love pervades the universe

its limitations and experience some kind of unity with other forms. Though each form is separate from other forms, in *reality* they are all forms of the same unity of life. The latent sense for this hidden inner reality indirectly makes itself felt even in the world of illusion through the attraction which one form has for another form.

The law of *gravitation*, to which all the planets and the stars are subject, is in its own way a dim reflection of the love which pervades every part of the universe.

Reign of love in inanimate nature

Even the forces of repulsion are in truth expressions of love, since things are repelled from each other because they are more powerfully attracted to some other things. Repulsion is a negative consequence of positive attraction. The forces of *cohesion* and *affinity* which prevail in the very constitution of matter are positive expressions of love. A striking example of love at this level is found in the attraction which the magnet exercises for iron. All these forms of love are of the lowest type, since they are necessarily

conditioned by the rudimentary consciousness in which they appear.

In the animal world love becomes more explicit in the form of *conscious impulses* which are directed towards different objects in the surroundings. *This*

Love in the animal kingdom

love is instinctive and it takes the form of gratifying different desires through the appropriation of suitable objects. When the tiger seeks to devour the deer he is in a very real sense in love with the deer. Sex-attraction is another form of love at this level. All the expressions of love at this stage have one thing in common, *viz., they all seek to satisfy some bodily impulse or desire* through the object of love.

Human love is much higher than all these lower forms of love because human beings have the fully developed form of consciousness. Though human love

Human love has to adjust to reason

is continuous with the lower sub-human forms of love, in a way, it is different from them, for henceforth its operations have to be carried on side by side with a new factor which is *reason*. Sometimes human love manifests itself as a force which is *divorced* from reason and runs parallel to it. Sometimes it manifests itself as a force which gets *mixed up* with reason and comes into *conflict* with it. Lastly, it expresses itself as a constituent of the harmonised whole where *love and reason have been balanced and fused into an integral unity*.

Thus human love can enter into three types of combination with reason. In the first type, the sphere of thought and the sphere of love are kept as separate as possible, *i. e., the sphere of*

Three combinations of love and reason

love is practically inaccessible to the operation of reason, and love is allowed little or no access to the objects of

thought. Complete separation between these two aspects of the spirit is of course never possible, but when there is an alternate functioning of love and reason (oscillating in their predominance) we have *a love which is unilluminated by reason or a reason which is unenlivened by love*. In the second type, love and reason are both simultaneously operative but they *do not work in harmony with each other*. Though this conflict creates confusion, it is a necessary phase in the evolution of the higher state where there is a real synthesis of love and reason. In the third type of love this synthesis between love and reason is an accomplished fact with the result that *both love as well as reason are so completely transformed that they precipitate the emergence of a new level of consciousness* which, compared to the normal human consciousness, is best described as *super-consciousness*.

Human love makes its appearance in the matrix of ego-consciousness which has countless desires. Love is coloured by these factors in many ways. Just as we

Qualitative variety in love get an ever changing variety of designs in a kaleidoscope by the various combinations of simpler elements, we find an almost limitless qualitative variety in the range of love owing to novel combinations of psychic factors. And just as there are infinite shades of colour in different flowers, so there are diverse delicate differences in human love.

Human love is encircled by a number of obstructive factors such as infatuation, lust, greed, anger and jealousy. In one sense, even these obstructive factors are either *forms* of lower love or the inevitable *side-results* of these lower forms of love. Infatuation, lust and greed might be looked upon as perverted and lower forms of love. In infatuation a person is *enamoured*

of a sensual object; in lust he develops a *craving* for sensations in relation to it; and in greed he desires to *possess* it. Of these three forms of lower love, greed has a tendency to extend from the original object to the *means* of obtaining it. Thus persons become greedy for money or power or fame, which can be instruments for possessing the different objects that are craved. Anger and jealousy come into existence when these lower forms of love are thwarted or threatened to be thwarted.

These lower forms of love obstruct the release of pure love. The stream of love can never become clear and steady until it is disentangled from these limiting

The lower is the enemy of the higher

and perverting forms of lower love. *The lower is the enemy of the higher.* If consciousness is

caught in the rhythm of the lower it cannot emancipate itself from its self-created ruts, finding it difficult to get out of them and advance further. Thus the lower form of love continues to interfere with the development of the higher form, and has to be given up in order to allow for the untrammelled appearance of the higher form of love.

The emergence of higher love from the shell of lower love is helped by the constant exercise of *dis-*

Love and infatuation

crimination. Therefore, love has to be carefully distinguished

from the obstructive factors of infatuation, lust, greed and anger. In infatuation, the person is a *passive victim* of the spell of conceived attraction for the object. In love there is an *active appreciation* of the intrinsic worth of the object of love.

Love is also different from lust. In lust there is reliance upon the *object of sense* and consequent spiritual *subordination* of the soul to it, but love puts the soul into

Love and lust direct and *co-ordinate* relation with the *reality* which is behind the form. Therefore lust is experienced as being *heavy* and love is experienced as being *light*. In lust there is a *narrowing down* of life and in love there is an *expansion* in being. *To have loved one soul is like adding its life to your own*. Your life is, as it were, multiplied and you virtually live in two centres. If you love the whole world you vicariously live in the whole world, but in lust there is an ebbing down of life and a general sense of hopeless dependence upon a form which is regarded as *another*. Thus, in lust there is the *accentuation of separateness and suffering*, but in love there is the *feeling of unity and joy*. Lust is dissipation, love is recreation. Lust is a craving of the senses, love is the expression of the spirit. Lust *seeks* fulfillment but love *experiences* fulfillment. In lust there is *excitement*, but in love there is *tranquility*.

Love is equally different from greed. Greed is possessiveness in all its gross and subtle forms. It seeks to appropriate gross things and persons as well as such abstract and intangible things as fame and power. In love, the annexation of the other person to your individual life is out of the question, and there is a free and creative outpouring that enlivens and replenishes the psychic being of the beloved independently of any expectations for the self. We have the paradox that *greed, which seeks for the appropriation of another object, in fact leads to the opposite result of bringing the self under the tutelage of the object*; and *love, which aims at giving away the self to the object, in fact leads to a spiritual incorporation of the beloved in the very being of the lover*. In greed the self tries to possess the object, but is itself possessed by the object. In love the self offers itself to the beloved without any reservations, but in

that very act it finds that it has included the beloved in its own being.

Infatuation, lust and greed constitute a spiritual malady which is often rendered more virulent by the aggravating symptoms of anger and jealousy. Pure love, in sharp contradistinction, is the bloom of spiritual perfection. Human love is so

**Pure love awakened
through grace**

tethered by these limiting conditions that the spontaneous appearance of pure love from within becomes impossible. So, when such pure love arises in the aspirant it is always a *gift*. *Pure love arises in the heart of the aspirant in response to the descent of grace from the Master.* When pure love is first received as a gift of the Master it becomes lodged in the consciousness of the aspirant like a seed in favourable soil, and in the course of time the seed develops into a plant and then into a full-grown tree.

The descent of the grace of the Master is conditioned, however, by the preliminary spiritual preparation of the aspirant. This preliminary spiritual preparation for grace is never complete until the aspirant has built into his psychic

**Spiritual preparation
for grace**

make-up some divine attributes. When a person avoids backbiting and thinks more of the good points in others than of their bad points, and when he can practise supreme tolerance, and desires the good of others even at the cost of his own self, he is ready to receive the grace of the Master. One of the greatest obstacles hindering this spiritual preparation of the aspirant is *worry*. When, with supreme effort, this obstacle of worry is overcome, a way is paved for the cultivation of the divine attributes which constitute the spiritual preparation of the disciple. *As soon as the disciple is ready*

the grace of the Master descends, for the Master, who is the ocean of divine love, is always on the look-out for the soul in whom his grace will fructify.

The kind of love which is awakened by the grace of the Master is a rare privilege. The mother who is willing to sacrifice all and to die for her child, and the martyr who is prepared to give up his very life for his country are indeed supremely noble, but they have not necessarily tasted this pure love which is born through the grace of the Master. Even the great *yogis* with long beards who, sitting in caves and mountains, are completely absorbed in deep *samadhi*, do not necessarily have this precious love.

Pure love awakened through the grace of the Master is more valuable than any other stimulus which may be utilised by the aspirant. Such love not only combines in itself the merits of all the disciplines but excels them all in its efficacy to lead the aspirant to his goal. When this love is born the aspirant has only one desire, and that is to be united with the Divine Beloved. Such withdrawal of consciousness from all other desires leads to infinite purity; therefore nothing purifies the aspirant more completely than this love. The aspirant is always willing to offer everything for the Divine Beloved, and no sacrifice is too difficult for him. All his thoughts are turned away from the self and come to be exclusively centred on the Divine Beloved. *Through the intensity of this evergrowing love he eventually breaks through the shackles of the self and becomes united with the Beloved.* This is the consummation of love. When love has thus found its fruition it has become *divine*.

Divine love is qualitatively different from human

love. Human love is for the *many in the One* and divine love is for the *One in the many*. Human love leads to innumerable complications and tangles, but divine love leads to integration and freedom.

**Divine love higher
than human love**

In divine love the personal and the impersonal aspects are equally balanced, but in human love the two aspects are in alternating ascendancy. When the personal note is predominant in human love it leads to utter blindness to the intrinsic worth of other forms. When, as in sense of duty, love is predominantly impersonal, it often makes one cold, rigid and mechanical. Sense of duty comes to the individual as an external *constraint* on behaviour, but in divine love there is *unrestrained freedom and unbounded spontaneity*. Human love in its personal and impersonal aspects is limited, but divine love with its fusion of the personal and the impersonal aspects is *infinite* in being and expression.

Even the highest type of human love is subject to the limitation of individual nature which persists till the seventh plane. *Divine love arises after the disappearance of the individual mind and is free from the trammels of individual nature.* In human love the duality of the lover

**In divine love the
lover is united with
Beloved**

and the beloved persists, but in divine love *the lover and the Beloved become one*. At this stage the aspirant has stepped out

of the domain of duality and become one with God, for divine love is God. *When the lover and the Beloved are one, that is the end and the beginning.*

It is for love that the whole universe sprang into existence and it is for the sake of love that it is kept going. God descends into the realm of illusion because the apparent duality of the Beloved and the lover is eventually contributory to His conscious enjoyment of

Universe came into existence for sake of love

His own divinity. *The development of love is conditioned and sustained by the tension of duality.* God has to suffer ap-

parent differentiation into a multiplicity of souls in order to carry on the game of love. They are His own forms, and in relation to them He at once assumes the role of the Divine Lover and the Divine Beloved. As the Beloved, He is the real and the ultimate object of their appreciation. As the Divine Lover, He is their real and ultimate saviour drawing them back to Himself. Thus though the whole world of duality is only an illusion, that illusion has come into being for a *significant purpose.*

Love is the reflection of God's unity in the world of duality. It constitutes the entire significance of creation. If love is excluded from life, all the souls in the world assume

Dynamics of love complete externality to each other and the only possible relations and contacts in such a loveless world are superficial and mechanical. It is because of love that the contacts and relations between individual souls become significant. It is love which gives meaning and value to all the happenings in the world of duality. But, *while love gives meaning to the world of duality, it is at the same time a standing challenge to duality.* As love gathers strength, it generates *creative restlessness* and becomes the main driving power of that *spiritual dynamic* which ultimately succeeds in *restoring to consciousness the original unity of being.*

The Infinity of the Truth

MOST persons are under the impression that anything which can claim to have spiritual importance must necessarily be very big from the worldly point of view. Thus, to be considered spiritual, an act must

**Source of error in
spiritual valuation**

have far-reaching effects, or must substantially affect an extensive field of life. They are constantly judging the worth of an action by the magnitude of its consequences. Man is ordinarily so immersed in the objects of the gross world that *the dimensions, magnitudes and quantities of the gross world unconsciously creep into his estimate of spiritual worth and pervert his evaluation.*

All this confusion is due to the fact that man's mind is often dominated by mathematical ideas, even when it is concerned with estimates of a spiritual nature.

Mathematical infinity

But that which is spiritually great is different in kind from that which is mathematically great. The mathematical idea of infinity is constructed by imagining the collection of an infinite number of units, each of which has a fixed and identical value or importance. Actually such mathematical infinity is unreachable even in imagination, because for any imaginable number we can conceive a number which would be still greater. *Each unit is*

false if it is taken to have separate and exclusive existence or importance. The mathematical idea of infinity thus turns out to be a product of an imagination activated by false assumptions.

Spiritual infinity is not a result of imaginative additions of the false. It is reality itself, which is perceived when false imagination is at rest. The infinity of the Truth cannot suffer any increase through additions, nor can it suffer any decrease through subtractions. In fact nothing *can* be added to it and, nothing *can* be taken away from it, because it is all-inclusive and leaves no room for any other, small or great. It is *immeasurable, indivisible and integral*.

The infinity of the Truth remains unaffected by any changes in the universe. All that happens in the universe is phenomenal, and as such amounts to zero from the viewpoint of the Truth. An earthquake, for example, is regarded as an appalling and disastrous calamity by the worldly-minded because of the immense destruction of life and property which it brings. However, even a calamity like this cannot in any way touch the infinite Truth which is at the heart of Reality. In fact *the spiritual infinity of the Truth does not suffer any limitation even if the entire universe is dissolved*. Therefore it is futile to measure it in terms of what is great according to the standards of the world.

The illusion which most aspirants find difficult to shake is the belief that infinite Truth is an object which has to be attained in some distant future, and that all

Truth not goal for future

life is just a means for this attainment. If Truth were to be confined only to the future and not to the past or the present it would not be infinite. It would at once become limited as an event which has its

origin in time. *All that life is and has, is at once deprived of intrinsic significance if it comes to be regarded as merely instrumental to some far-off event.* This is definitely a false point of view.

Life is not meant to be rich in spiritual significance at some distant date, but it is so at every moment, if the mind is disburdened of illusions. *Only through a clear and tranquil mind is the true nature of spiritual infinity grasped as something which is not yet to be, but which already has been, is and ever will be an eternal self-fulfillment. When every moment is rich with eternal significance there is neither the lingering clinging to the dead past, nor a longing expectation for the future, but an integral living in the eternal Now.* Only through such living can the spiritual infinity of the Truth be realised in life.

It is not right to deprive the present of all importance by subordinating it to an end in the future, for this means the imaginary accumulation of all importance in the imagined future rather than the perception and realisation of the true importance of everything that now exists. *There cannot be ebb and tide in eternity, no meaningless intervals between intermittent harvests, but a fullness of being which cannot suffer impoverishment of a single instant.* When life seems to be idle or empty it is not due to any curtailment of the infinity of the Truth, but it is due to one's own lack of capacity to enter into its full possession.

Just as it is not right to pile up all spiritual importance for some anticipated future, it is equally not right to arrogate it exclusively to *things that create ado.* The great and grand things of life are not the only ones surcharged with spiritual meaning. A thing need not be unusual or particularly striking in order to be spiritually

significant. The unusual and the striking exist relative to the usual and the habitual, and they are not in themselves necessarily representative of absolute spiritual beauty. Thus it is not necessary for a man to give huge sums of money for a cause in order to be spiritually great. A poor man may be unable to do this and yet be none the less spiritual if he gives what he can. *It is not the amount that endows the gift with spiritual meaning; it is the spirit in which it is given.* In fact, a large donation may often be accompanied with pride or some selfish motive, and then it loses its spiritual value. Even a small gift, given with humility and utterly unselfish love, is endowed with a much greater spiritual value.

Spiritual life is not a matter of quantity but of inherent quality of living. Spiritual infinity includes in its scope all phases of life. It comprises acts which are great as well as acts which are small. *Being greater than the greatest, spiritual infinity is also smaller than the smallest, and it*

Spiritual infinity comprises greatest and smallest

can equally express itself through happenings irrespective of whether they are outwardly small or great. Thus a smile or a look stands on the same level as offering one's life for a cause, when the smile or the look springs from Truth-consciousness. *There are no gradations in spiritual importance, when all life is lived in the shadow of eternity.* If life were to consist only of big things and if all the little things were to be omitted from its scope, it would not only be finite, but would be extremely poor. *The infinite Truth which is latent in everything can reveal itself only when life is seen and accepted in its totality.*

Limitation comes into existence owing to ego-centered desires and self-will. *Possessiveness in all its forms leads to a life of limitation.* For example, if one covets the love of someone and, instead of winning the

Freedom and joy of non-duality

love of that person loses it to another, there ensues a narrowing down and strangling of the free life of the spirit and one has an acute consciousness of limitation. This is the origin of the pain of suffocating *jealousy*. But, if one looks at the situation with a heart purged of longing, the love which is received by the other will be seen in its natural beauty; and *in the clarity of perception which comes through non-possessiveness, one will not only taste of the freedom of non-duality but also of its joy*. When someone else receives that love it is like one's self receiving it, since no longer does one insist upon the claims of a single form, having identified oneself with life in all its forms.

In non-duality there is freedom from limitation, and the knowledge and appreciation of things as they are. *In non-duality alone is there the realisation of true spiritual*

Realising spiritual infinity through non-duality

infinity that secures abiding and unfading bliss. The limitation of jealousy is like all other limitations such as anger, hate and cravings: they are all one's own creation. *All finiteness and limitation is subjective and self-created. With the surrenderance of self-will and ego-centred imagination there arises a true perception of the infinite worth of that which IS.*

When the infinity of the Truth is adequately grasped from the point of view of non-duality, it also becomes fruitful for the adequate solution of social

Implications of spiritual infinity for social problems

problems based on duality as an irreducible fact. Mere manipulation of numbers, however clever, can neither yield right adjustment between the individual and society,

nor can it yield true harmony between various groups which come to exist within the society.

If social claims of a general nature are determined by the considerations of a small minority, the interests of the vast majority remain unreconciled, and

Minority and majority the majority remains inevitably in rivalry and opposition to the minority. On the other hand, in democratic countries the claims of a general nature are determined by consideration of majority viewpoint rather than by the minority. This point of view, however, is still within the domain of duality, where the many exist, and therefore the problem of minorities remains unsolved. Since their interests remain unreconciled the minority remains inevitably in rivalry and opposition to the majority.

As long as a social problem is dominated by the idea of numbers and multiplicity there is no lasting solution for it. The lasting solution can come only when

Indivisible totality it is illuminated by the truth of the *indivisible totality and intrinsic unity of all. The One in all cannot be contacted through the multiplication of the many, but only by shedding the false idea of the many. Any number, however great, is bound to be finite. Spiritual infinity is not a number, however great; it is the sole reality without a rival.*

Where there are many, there is necessarily comparison between them. There is a smaller and a greater, a hierarchy of claims, privileges and rights, and all

The world of the many valuation gets twisted by the recognition of gradations of different types. From the spiritual point of view all these are forms of false consciousness, because the same Truth vibrates in everyone. The similarity which is experienced in realisation, however, is necessarily

different from the principle of *equality*, i. e., that one person is equal to any other single person in respect to claims, right and worth, but can never be equal within duality to two or more persons.

On the other hand, the spiritual infinity of the Truth has room for the paradox that one person can be regarded as the totality itself. Therefore one person is **The one in each and all** not only capable of being looked upon as equal in importance to two or more persons but even as equal to all. *In spiritual infinity all comparison is out of place. There is no smaller or greater, or hierarchy of claims, privileges and rights, and valuation remains unclouded because of the unmarred perception of The One in each and all. Since everyone in creation is not only in spiritual infinity, but is that indivisible spiritual infinity, then everyone is first in importance and no one is second.*

In social life the recognition of the spiritual infinity of the Truth will mean a challenge to individualism as well as to collectivism. It initiates a new way of thinking **The new civilisation** in terms of an indivisible totality and it discards all the relative values of comparison *in favour of the recognition of the intrinsic worth of everything.* In a civilisation based upon a true idea of the spiritual infinity of the Truth, there will therefore be no problems of majority and minority, of rivalry and competition, and of those comparisons and laborious assessments which so often become a shelter for pride and separative ego. Life then will be infinitely simple and integral, because the illusions which create rifts and complexities will all have disappeared.

LIST OF BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

GOD SPEAKS

LISTEN HUMANITY

LIFE AT ITS BEST

BEAMS ON THE SPIRITUAL PANORAMA

THE EVERYTHING AND THE NOTHING

DISCOURSES

There are many books about Meher Baba and various phases of his unique work.

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